DONAL GRANT

GEORGE MACDONALD

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DONAL GRANT

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BY

GEORGE MAC DONALD, LL.D.

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BY

GEORGE MAC DONALD, LL.D.

AUTHOR OF "MALCOLM," ETC.

NEW EDITION

LONDON

KEGAN PAUL, TRENCH, TRÜBNER & CO., LTD.

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DONAL GRANT.

CHAPTER I.

FOOT-FARING.

It was a lovely morning in the first of summer. Donal Grant was descending a path on a hillside to the valley below—a sheep-track of which he knew every winding as well as any boy his half-mile to and from school. But he had never before gone down the hill with the feeling that he was not about to go up again. He was on his way to pastures very new, and in the distance only negatively inviting. But his heart was too full to be troubled—nor was his a heart to harbour a care, the next thing to an evil spirit, though not quite so bad; for one care may drive out another, while one devil is sure to bring in another.

A great billowy waste of mountains lay beyond him, amongst which played the shadow at their games of hide and seek—graciously merry in the eyes of the happy man, but sadly solemn in the eyes of him in whose heart the dreary thoughts of the past are at a like game. Behind Donal lay a world of dreams into which he dared not turn and look, yet from which he could scarce avert his eyes.

He was nearing the foot of the hill when he stumbled and almost fell, but recovered himself with the agility of a mountaineer, and the unpleasant knowledge that the sole of one of his shoes was all but off. Never had he left home for college that his father had not made personal inspection of his shoes to see that they were fit for the journey, but on this departure they had been forgotten. He sat down and took off the failing equipment. It was too far gone to do anything temporary with it; and of discomforts a loose sole to one's shoe in walking is of the worst. The only thing was to take off the other shoe and both stockings

and go barefoot. He tied all together with a piece of string, made them fast to his deerskin knapsack, and resumed his walk. The thing did not trouble him much. To have what we want is riches, but to be able to do without is power. To have shoes is a good thing; to be able to walk without them is a better. But it was long since Donal had walked barefoot, and he found his feet like his shoe, weaker in the sole than was pleasant.

"It's time," he said to himself, when he found he was stepping gingerly, "I ga'e my feet a turn at the auld accomplishment. It's a pity to grow nae so fit for onything suner nor ye need. I wad like to lie doon at last wi' hard soles!"

In every stream he came to he bathed his feet, and often on the way rested them, when otherwise able enough to go on. He had no certain goal, though he knew his direction, and was in no haste. He had confidence in God and in his own powers as the gift of God, and knew that wherever he went he needed not be hungry long, even should the little money in his pocket be spent. It is better to trust in work than in money: God never buys anything, and is for ever at work; but if any one trust in work, he has to learn that he must trust in nothing but strength—the self-existent, original strength only; and Donal Grant had long begun to learn that. The man has begun to be strong who knows that, separated from life essential, he is weakness itself, that, one with his origin, he will be of strength inexhaustible. Donal was now descending the heights of youth to walk along the king's highroad of manhood: happy he who, as his sun is going down behind the western, is himself ascending the eastern hill, returning through old age to the second and better childhood which shall not be taken from him! He who turns his back on the setting sun goes to meet the rising sun; he who loses his life shall find it. Donal had lost his past—but not so as to be ashamed. There are many ways of losing! His past had but crept, like the dead, back to God who gave it; in better shape it would be his by and by! Already he had begun to foreshadow this truth: God would keep it for him.

He had set out before the sun was up, for he would not be met by friends or acquaintances. Avoiding the well-known farm-houses and occasional village, he took his way up the river, and about noon came to a hamlet where no one knew him—a cluster of straw-roofed cottages, low and white, with two little windows each. He walked straight through it not meaning to stop; but, spying in front of the last cottage a rough stone seat under a low, widespreading elder tree, was tempted to sit down and rest a little. The day was now hot, and the shadow of the tree inviting.

He had but seated himself when a woman came to the door of the cottage, looked at him for a moment, and probably thinking him, from his bare feet, poorer than he was, said—

"Wad ye like a drink?"

"Ay, wad I," answered Donal, "—a drink o' watter, gien ye please."

"What for no milk?" asked the woman.

"'Cause I'm able to pey for 't," answered Donal.

"I want nae peyment," she rejoined, perceiving his drift as little as probably my reader.

"An' I want nae milk," returned Donal.

"Weel, ye may pey for 't gien ye like," she rejoined.

"But I dinna like," replied Donal.

"Weel, ye're a some queer customer!" she remarked.

"I thank ye, but I'm nae customer, 'cep' for a drink o' watter," he persisted, looking in her face with a smile; "an' watter has aye been grâtis sin' the days o' Adam—'cep' maybe i' toons i' the het pairts o' the warl'."

The woman turned into the cottage, and came out again presently with a delft basin, holding about a pint, full of milk, yellow and rich.

"There!" she said; "drink an' be thankfu'."

"I'll be thankfu' ohn drunken," said Donal. "I thank ye wi' a' my heart. But I canna bide to tak for naething what I can pey for, an' I dinna like to lay oot my siller upon a luxury I can weel eneuch du wantin', for I haena muckle. I wadna be shabby nor yet greedy."

"Drink for the love o' God," said the woman.

Donal took the bowl from her hand, and drank till all was gone.

"Wull ye hae a drap mair?" she asked.

"Na, no a drap," answered Donal. "I'll gang i' the stren'th o' that ye hae gi'en me—maybe no jist forty days, gudewife, but mair nor forty minutes, an' that's a gude pairt o' a day. I thank ye hertily. Yon was the milk o' human kin'ness, gien ever was ony."

As he spoke he rose, and stood up refreshed for his journey.

"I hae a sodger laddie awa' i' the het pairts ye spak o'," said the woman: "gien ye hadna ta'en the milk, ye wad hae gi'en me a sair hert."

"Eh, gudewife, it wad hae gi'en me ane to think I had!" returned Donal. "The Lord gie ye back yer sodger laddie safe an' soon'! Maybe I'll hae to gang efter 'im, sodger mysel'."

"Na, na, that wadna do. Ye're a scholar—that's easy to see,

for a' ye're sae plain spoken. It dis a body's hert guid to hear a man 'at un'erstan's things say them plain oot i' the tongue his mither taucht him. Sic a ane 'ill gang straucht till's makker, an' fin' a'thing there hame-like. Lord, I wuss minnisters wad speyk like ither fowk!"

"Ye wad sair please my mither sayin' that," remarked Donal. "Ye maun be jist sic anither as her!"

"Weel, come in, an' sit ye doon oot o' the sin, an' hae something to ait."

"Na, I'll tak nae mair frae ye the day, an' I thank ye," replied Donal; "I canna weel bide."

"What for no?"

"It's no sae muckle 'at I'm in a hurry as 'at I maun be duin'."

"Whaur are ye b'un' for, gien a body may speir?"

"I'm gaein' to seek—no my fortin, but my daily breid. Gien I spak as a richt man, I wad say I was gaein' to luik for the wark set me. I'm feart to say that straucht oot; I haena won sae far as that yet. I winna du naething though 'at he wadna hae me du. I daur to say that—sae be I un'erstan'. My mither says the day 'ill come whan I'll care for naething but his wull."

"Yer mither 'ill be Janet Grant, I'm thinkin'! There canna be twa sic in ae country-side!"

"Ye're i' the richt," answered Donal. "Ken ye my mither?"

"I hae seen her; an' to see her 's to ken her."

"Ay, gien wha sees her be sic like 's hersel'."

"I canna preten' to that; but she's weel kent throu' a' the country for a God-fearin' wuman.—An' whaur 'll ye be for the noo?"

"I'm jist upo' the tramp, luikin' for wark."

"An' what may ye be pleast to ca' wark?"

"Ow, jist the communication o' what I hae the un'erstan'in' o'."

"Aweel, gien ye'll condescen' to advice frae an auld wife, I'll gie ye a bit wi' ye: tak na ilka lass ye see for a born angel. Misdoobt her a wee to begin wi'. Hing up yer jeedgment o' her a wee. Luik to the moo' an' the e'en o' her."

"I thank ye," said Donal, with a smile, in which the woman spied the sadness; "I'm no like to need the advice."

She looked at him pitifully, and paused.

"Gien ye come this gait again," she said, "ye'll no gang by my door?"

"I wull no," replied Donal, and wishing her good-bye with a grateful heart, betook himself to his journey.

He had not gone far when he found himself on a wide moor.

He sat down on a big stone, and began to turn things over in his mind. This is how his thoughts went:

"I can never be the man I was! The thoucht o' my heart 's ta'en frae me! I canna think aboot things as I used. There's naething sae bonny as afore. Whan the life slips frae him, hoo can a man gang on livin'! Yet I'm no deid—that's what maks the diffeeclety o' the situation! Gien I war deid—weel, I kenna what than! I doobt there wad be trible still, though some things micht be lichter. But that's neither here nor there; I maun live; I hae nae ch'ice; I didna mak mysel', an' I'm no gaein' to meddle wi' mysel'! I think mair o' mysel' nor daur that!

"But there's ae queston I maun sattle afore I gang farther—an' that's this: am I to be less or mair nor I was afore? It's agreed I canna be the same: if I canna be the same, I maun aither be less or greater than I was afore: whilk o' them is't to be? I winna hae that queston to speir mair nor ance! I'll be mair nor I was. To sink to less wad be to lowse grip o' my past as weel's o' my futur! An' hoo wad I ever luik her i' the face gien I grew less because o' her! A chiel' like mê lat a bonny lassie think hersel' to blame for what I grew til! An' there's a greater nor the lass to be considert! 'Cause he seesna fit to gie me her I wad hae, is he no to hae his wull o' me? It's a gran' thing to ken a lassie like yon, an' a gran'er thing yet to be allooed to lo'e her: to sit down an' greit 'cause I'm no to merry her, wad be most oongratefu'! What for sud I threip 'at I ought to hae her? What for sudna I be disapp'intit as weel as anither? I hae as guid a richt to ony guid 'at's to come o' that, I fancy! Gien it be a man's pairt to cairry a sair hert, it canna be his pairt to sit doon wi' 't upo' the ro'd-side, an' lay't upo' his lap, an' greit ower't, like a bairn wi' a cuttit finger: he maun haud on his ro'd. Wha am I to differ frae the lave o' my fowk! I s' be like the lave, an' gien I greit I winna girn. The Lord himsel' had to be croont wi' pain. Eh, my bonnie doo! But ye lo'e a better man, an' that's a sair comfort! Gien it had been itherwise, I div not think I could hae borne the pain at my hert. But as it's guid an' no ill 'at's come to ye, I haena you an' mysel' tu to greit for, an' that's a sair comfort! Lord, I'll clim' to thee, an' gaither o' the healin' 'at grows for the nations i' thy gairden.

"I see the thing as plain's thing can be: the cure o' a' ill 's jist mair life! That's it! Life abune an' ayont the life 'at took the stroke! An' gien throu' this hert-brak I come by mair life, it'll be jist ane o' the throes o' my h'avenly birth—i' the whilk the bairn has as mony o' the pains as the mither: that's maybe a differ 'atween the twa—the earthly an' the h'avenly!

"Sae noo I hae to begin fresh, an' lat the thing 'at's past an' gane slip efter ither dreams. Eh, but it's a bonny dream yet! It lies close 'ahin' me, no to be forgotten, no to be luikit at—like ane o' thae dreams o' watter an' munelicht 'at has nae wark i' them: a body wadna lie a' nicht an' a' day tu in a dream o' the sowl's gloamin'! Na, Lord; mak o' me a strong man, an' syne gie me as muckle o' the bonny as may please thee. Wha am I to lippen til, gien no to thee, my ain father an' mither an' gran'-father an' a' body in ane, for thoo giedst me them a'!

"Noo I'm to begin again—a fresh life frae this minute! I'm to set oot frae this verra p'int, like ane o' the youngest sons i' the fairy tales, to seek my portion, an' see what's comin' to meet me as I gang to meet hit. The warl' afore me's my story-buik. I canna see ower the leaf till I come to the en' o' 't. Whan I was a bairn, jist able, wi' sair endeevour, to win at the hert o' print, I never wad luik on afore! The ae time I did it, I thoucht I had dune a shamefu' thing, like luikin' in at a keyhole—as I did jist ance tu, whan I thank God my mither gae me sic a blessed lickin' 'at I kent it maun be something dreidfu' I had dune. Sae here's for what's comin'! I ken whaur it maun come frae, an' I s' make it welcome. My mither says the main mischeef i' the warl' is, 'at fowk winna lat the Lord hae his 'ain w'y, an' sae he has jist to tak it, whilk maks it a sair thing for them."

Therewith he rose to encounter that which was on its way to meet him. He is a fool who stands and lets life move past him like a panorama. He also is a fool who would lay hands on its motion, and change its pictures. He can but distort and injure, if he does not ruin them, and come upon awful shadows behind them.

And lo! as he glanced around him, already something of the old mysterious loveliness, now for so long vanished from the face of the visible world, had returned to it—not yet as it was before, but with dawning promise of a new creation, a fresh beauty, in welcoming which he was not turning from the old, but receiving the new that God sent him. He might yet be many a time sad, but to lament would be to act as if he were wronged—would be at best weak and foolish! He would look the new life in the face, and be what it should please God to make him. The scents the wind brought him from field and garden and moor, seemed sweeter than ever wind-borne scents before: they were seeking to comfort him! He sighed—but turned from the sigh to God, and found fresh gladness and welcome. The wind hovered about him as if it would fain have something to do in the matter; the river rippled and shone as if it knew something

worth knowing as yet unrevealed. The delight of creation is verily in secrets, but in secrets as truths on the way. All secrets are embryo revelations. On the far horizon heaven and earth met as old friends, who, though never parted, were ever renewing their friendship. The world, like the angels, was rejoicing—if not over a sinner that had repented, yet over a man that had passed from a lower to a higher condition of life—out of its earth into its air: he was going to live above, and look down on the inferior world! Ere the shades of evening fell that day around Donal Grant, he was in the new childhood of a new world.

I do not mean such *thoughts* had never been present to him before; but to *think* a thing is only to look at it in a glass; to know it as God would have us know it, and as we must know it to live, is to see it as we see love in a friend's eyes—to have it as the love the friend sees in ours. To make things real to us, is the end and the battle-cause of life. We often think we believe what we are only presenting to our imaginations. The least thing can overthrow that kind of faith. The imagination is an endless help towards faith, but it is no more faith than a dream of food will make us strong for the next day's work. To know God as the beginning and end, the root and cause, the giver, the enabler, the love and joy and perfect good, the present one existence in all things and degrees and conditions, is life; and faith, in its simplest, truest, mightiest form is—to do his will.

Donal was making his way towards the eastern coast, in the certain hope of finding work of one kind or another. He could have been well content to pass his life as a shepherd like his father but for two things: he knew what it would be well for others to know; and he had a hunger after the society of books. A man must be able to do without whatever is denied him, but when his heart is hungry for an honest thing, he may use honest endeavour to obtain it. Donal desired to be useful and live for his generation, also to be with books. To be where was a good library would suit him better than buying books, for without a place in which to keep them, they are among the *impedimenta* of life. And Donal knew that in regard to books he was in danger of loving after the fashion of this world: books he had a strong inclination to accumulate and hoard; therefore the use of a library was better than the means of buying them. Books as possessions are also of the things that pass and perish—as surely as any other form of earthly having; they are of the playthings God lets men have that they may learn to distinguish between apparent and real possession: if having will not teach them, loss may.

But who would have thought, meeting the youth as he walked

the road with shoeless feet, that he sought the harbour of a great library in some old house, so as day after day to feast on the thoughts of men who had gone before him! For his was no antiquarian soul; it was a soul hungry after life, not after the mummy cloths enwrapping the dead.

CHAPTER II.

A SPIRITUAL FOOT-PAD.

He was now walking southward, but would soon, when the mountains were well behind him, turn toward the east. He carried a small wallet, filled chiefly with oatcake and hard skim-milk cheese: about two o'clock he sat down on a stone, and proceeded to make a meal. A brook from the hills ran near: for that he had chosen the spot, his fare being dry. He seldom took any other drink than water: he had learned that strong drink at best but discounted to him his own at a high rate.

He drew from his pocket a small thick volume he had brought as the companion of his journey, and read as he ate. His seat was on the last slope of a grassy hill, where many huge stones rose out of the grass. A few yards beneath was a country road, and on the other side of the road a small stream, in which the brook that ran swiftly past, almost within reach of his hand, eagerly lost itself. On the further bank of the stream, perfuming the air, grew many bushes of meadow-sweet, or *queen-of-the-meadow*, as it is called in Scotland; and beyond lay a lovely stretch of nearly level pasture. Farther eastward all was a plain, full of farms. Behind him rose the hill, shutting out his past; before him lay the plain, open to his eyes and feet. God had walled up his past, and was disclosing his future.

When he had eaten his dinner, its dryness forgotten in the condiment his book supplied, he rose, and taking his cap from his head, filled it from the stream, and drank heartily; then emptied it, shook the last drops from it, and put it again upon his head.

"Ho, ho, young man!" cried a voice.

Donal looked, and saw a man in the garb of a clergyman regarding him from the road, and wiping his face with his sleeve.

"You should mind," he continued, "how you scatter your favours."

"I beg your pardon, sir," said Donal, taking off his cap again; "I hadna a notion there was leevin' cratur near me."

"It's a fine day!" said the minister.

"It is that, sir!" answered Donal.

"Which way are you going?" asked the minister, adding, as if in apology for his seeming curiosity, "—You're a scholar, I see!" —with a glance towards the book he had left open on his stone.

"Nae sae muckle as I wad fain be, sir," answered Donal—then called to mind a resolve he had made to speak English for the future.

"A modest youth, I see!" returned the clergyman; but Donal hardly liked the tone in which he said it.

"That depends on what you mean by a scholar," he said.

"Oh!" answered the minister, not thinking much about his reply, but in a bantering humour willing to draw the lad out, "the learned man modestly calls himself a scholar."

"Then there was no modesty in saying I was not so much of a scholar as I should like to be; every scholar would say the same."

"A very good answer!" said the clergyman patronizingly. "You'll be a learned man some day!" And he smiled as he said it.

"When would you call a man learned?" asked Donal.

"That is hard to determine, seeing those that claim to be contradict each other so."

"What good then can there be in wanting to be learned?"

"You get the mental discipline of study."

"It seems to me," said Donal, "a pity to get a body's discipline on what may be worthless. It's just as good discipline to my teeth to dine on bread and cheese, as it would be to exercise them on sheep's grass."

"I've got hold of a humorist!" said the clergyman to himself.

Donal picked up his wallet and his book, and came down to the road. Then first the clergyman saw that he was barefooted. In his childhood he had himself often gone without shoes and stockings, yet the youth's lack of them prejudiced him against him.

"It must be the fellow's own fault!" he said to himself. "He shan't catch me with his chaff!"

Donal would rather have forded the river, and gone to inquire his way at the nearest farm-house, but he thought it polite to walk a little way with the clergyman.

"How far are you going?" asked the minister at length.

"As far as I can," replied Donal.

"Where do you mean to pass the night?"

"In some barn perhaps, or on some hill-side."

"I am sorry to hear you can do no better."

"You don't think, sir, what a decent bed costs; and a barn is

generally, a hill-side always clean. In fact the hill-side 's the best. Many's the time I have slept on one. It's a strange notion some people have, that it's more respectable to sleep under man's roof than God's."

"To have no settled abode," said the clergyman, and paused.

"Like Abraham?" suggested Donal with a smile. "An abiding city seems hardly necessary to pilgrims and strangers! I fell asleep once on the top of Glashgar: when I woke the sun was looking over the edge of the horizon. I rose and gazed about me as if I were but that moment created. If God had called me, I should hardly have been astonished."

"Or frightened?" asked the minister.

"No, sir; why should a man fear the presence of his saviour?"

"You said *God!*" answered the minister.

"God is my saviour! Into his presence it is my desire to come."

"Under shelter of the atonement," supplemented the minister.

"Gien ye mean by that, sir," cried Donal, forgetting his English, "onything to come 'atween my God an' me, I'll ha'e nane o' 't. I'll hae naething hide me frae him wha made me! I wadna hide a thoucht frae him. The waur it is, the mair need he see't."

"What book is that you are reading?" asked the minister sharply. "It's not your bible, I'll be bound! You never got such notions from *it!*"

He was angry with the presumptuous youth—and no wonder; for the gospel the minister preached was a gospel but to the slavish and unfilial.

"It's Shelley," answered Donal, recovering himself.

The minister had never read a word of Shelley, but had a very decided opinion of him. He gave a loud rude whistle.

"So! that's where you go for your theology! I was puzzled to understand you, but now all is plain! Young man, you are on the brink of perdition. That book will poison your very vitals!"

"Indeed, sir, it will never go deep enough for that! But it came near touching them as I sat eating my bread and cheese."

"He's an infidel!" said the minister fiercely.

"A kind of one," returned Donal, "but not of the worst sort. It's the people who call themselves believers that drive the like of poor Shelley to the mouth of the pit."

"He hated the truth," said the minister.

"He was always seeking after it," said Donal, "though to be

sure he didn't get to the end of the search. Just listen to this, sir, and say whether it be very far from Christian."

Donal opened his little volume, and sought his passage. The minister but for curiosity and the dread of seeming absurd would have stopped his ears and refused to listen. He was a man of not merely dry or stale, but of deadly doctrines. He would have a man love Christ for protecting him from God, not for leading him to God in whom alone is bliss, out of whom all is darkness and misery. He had not a glimmer of the truth that eternal life is to know God. He imagined justice and love dwelling in eternal opposition in the bosom of eternal unity. He knew next to nothing about God, and misrepresented him hideously. If God were such as he showed him, it would be the worst possible misfortune to have been created.

Donal had found the passage. It was in *The Mask of Anarchy*. He read the following stanzas :—

Let a vast assembly be,
And with great solemnity
Declare with measured words that ye
Are, as God has made ye, free.

Be your strong and simple words
Keen to wound as sharpened swords,
And wide as targes let them be,
With their shade to cover ye.

And if then the tyrants dare,
Let them ride among you there,
Slash, and stab, and maim, and hew—
What they like, that let them do.

With folded arms and steady eyes,
And little fear, and less surprise,
Look upon them as they slay,
Till their rage has died away.

And that slaughter to the Nation
Shall steam up like inspiration,
Eloquent, oracular—
A volcano heard afar.

Ending, the reader turned to the listener. But the listener had understood little of the meaning, and less of the spirit. He hated opposition to the powers on the part of any below himself, yet scorned the idea of submitting to persecution.

"What think you of that, sir?" asked Donal.

"Sheer nonsense!" answered the minister. "Where would Scotland be now but for resistance?"

"There's more than one way of resisting, though," returned

Donal. "Enduring evil was the Lord's way. I don't know about Scotland, but I fancy there would be more Christians, and of a better stamp, in the world, if that had been the mode of resistance always adopted by those that called themselves such. Anyhow it was *his* way."

"Shelley's, you mean!"

"I don't mean Shelley's, I mean Christ's. In spirit Shelley was far nearer the truth than those who made him despise the very name of Christianity without knowing what it really was. But God will give every man fair play."

"Young man!" said the minister, with an assumption of great solemnity and no less authority, "I am bound to warn you that you are in a state of rebellion against God, and *he* will not be mocked. Good morning!"

Donal sat down on the roadside—he would let the minister have a good start of him—took again his shabby little volume, held more talk with the book-embodied spirit of Shelley, and saw more and more clearly how he was misled in his every notion of Christianity, and how different those who gave him his notions must have been from the evangelists and apostles. He saw in the poet a boyish nature striving after liberty, with scarce a notion of what liberty really was: he knew nothing of the law of liberty —oneness with the will of our existence, which would have us free with its own freedom.

When the clergyman was long out of sight he rose and went on, and soon came to a bridge by which he crossed the river. Then on he went through the cultivated plain, his spirits never flagging. He was a pilgrim on his way to his divine fate!

CHAPTER III.

THE MOOR.

THE night began to descend and he to be weary, and look about him for a place of repose. But there was a long twilight before him, and it was warm.

For some time the road had been ascending, and by and by he found himself on a bare moor, among heather not yet in bloom, and a forest of bracken. Here was a great, beautiful chamber for him! and what better bed than God's heather! what better canopy than God's high, star-studded night, with its airy curtains of dusky darkness! Was it not in this very chamber

that Jacob had his vision of the mighty stair leading up to the gate of heaven! Was it not under such a roof Jesus spent his last nights on the earth! For comfort and protection he sought no human shelter, but went out into his Father's house—out under his Father's heaven! The small and narrow were not to him the safe, but the wide and open. Thick walls cover men from the enemies they fear; the Lord sought space. There the angels come and go more freely than where roofs gather distrust. If ever we hear a far-off rumour of angel-visit, it is not from some solitary plain with lonely children?

Donal walked along the high table-land till he was weary, and rest looked blissful. Then he turned aside from the rough track into the heather and bracken. When he came to a little dry hollow, with a yet thicker growth of heather, its tops almost close as those of his bed at his father's cottage, he sought no further. Taking his knife, he cut a quantity of heather and ferns, and heaped it on the top of the thickest bush; then creeping in between the cut and the growing, he cleared the former from his face that he might see the worlds over him, and putting his knapsack under his head, fell fast asleep.

When he woke not even the shadow of a dream lingered to let him know what he had been dreaming. He woke with such a clear mind, such an immediate uplifting of the soul, that it seemed to him no less than to Jacob that he must have slept at the foot of the heavenly stair. The wind came round him like the stuff of thought unshaped, and every breath he drew seemed like God breathing afresh into his nostrils the breath of life. Who knows what the thing we call air is? We know about it, but it we do not know. The sun shone as if smiling at the self-importance of the sulky darkness he had driven away, and the world seemed content with a heavenly content. So fresh was Donal's sense that he felt as if his sleep within and the wind without had been washing him all the night. So peaceful, so blissful was his heart that it longed to share its bliss; but there was no one within sight, and he set out again on his journey.

He had not gone far when he came to a dip in the moorland—a round hollow, with a cottage of turf in the middle of it, from whose chimney came a little smoke: there too the day was begun! He was glad he had not seen it before, for then he might have missed the repose of the open night. At the door stood a little girl in a blue frock. She saw him, and ran in. He went down and drew near to the door. It stood wide open, and he could not help seeing in.

A man sat at the table in the middle of the floor, his forehead

on his hand. Donal did not see his face. He seemed waiting, like his father for the Book, while his mother got it from the top of the wall. He stepped over the threshold, and in the simplicity of his heart, said :—

"Ye'll be gaein' to hae worship!

"Na, na!" returned the man, raising his head, and taking a brief, hard stare at his visitor; "we dinna set up for prayin' fowk i' this hoose." We ley that to them 'at kens what they hae to be thankfu' for."

"I made a mistak," said Donal. "I thoucht ye micht hae been gaein' to say gude mornin' to yer makker, an' wad hae likit to j'in wi' ye; for *I* kenna what I haena to be thankfu' for. Guid day to ye."

"Ye can bide an' tak yer parritch gien ye like."

"Ow, na, I thank ye. Ye micht think I cam for the parritch, an' no for the prayers. I like as ill to be coontit a hypocrite as gien I war ane."

"Ye can bide an' hae worship wi' 's, gien ye tak the buik yersel'."

"I canna lead whaur 's nane to follow. Na; I'll du better on the muir my lane."

But the gudewife was a religious woman after her fashion—who can be after any one else's? She came with a bible in her hand, and silently laid it on the table. Donal had never yet prayed aloud except in a murmur by himself on the hill, but, thus invited, could not refuse. He read a psalm of trouble, breaking into hope at the close, then spoke as follows :—

"Freens, I'm but yoong, as ye see, an' never afore daured open my moo i' sic fashion, but it comes to me to speyk, an' wi' yer leave speyk I wull. I canna help thinkin' the gudeman 's i' some trible—siclike, maybe, as King Dawvid whan he made the psalm I hae been readin' i' yer hearin'. Ye observt hoo it began like a stormy mornin', but ye h'ard hoo it changed or a' was dune. The sun comes oot bonny i' the en', an' ye hear the birds beginnin' to sing, tellin' Natur' to gie ower her greitin'. An' what brings the guid man til's senses, div ye think? What but just the thoucht o' him 'at made him, him 'at cares aboot him, him 'at maun come to ill himsel' 'afore he lat onything he made come to ill. Sir, lat's gang doon upo' oor knees, an' commit the keepin' o' oor sowls to him as til a faithfu' creator, wha winna miss his pairt 'atween him an' hiz."

They went down on their knees, and Donal said,

"O Lord, oor ain father an' saviour, the day ye hae sent 's has arrived bonny an' gran', an' we bless ye for sen'in' 't; but eh, oor

father, we need mair the licht that shines i' the darker place. We need the dawn o' a spiritual day inside 's, or the bonny day ootside winna gang for muckle. Lord, oor micht, spëyk a word o' peacefu' recall to ony dog o' thine 'at may be worryin' at the hert o' ony sheep o' thine 'at's run awa; but dinna ca' him back sae as to lea' the puir sheep 'ahint him; fess back dog an' lamb thegither, O Lord. Haud 's a' frae ill, an' guide 's a' to guid, an' oor mornin' prayer 's ower. Amen."

They rose from their knees, and sat silent for a moment. Then the guidwife put the pot on the fire with the water for the porridge. But Donal rose, and walked out of the cottage, half wondering at himself that he had dared as he had, yet feeling he had done but the most natural thing in the world.

"Hoo a body 's to win throuw the day wantin' the lord o' the day an' the hoor an' the minute, 's 'ayont me!" he said to himself, and hastened away.

Ere noon the blue line of the far ocean rose on the horizon.

CHAPTER IV.

THE TOWN.

DONAL was queer, some of my readers will think, and I admit it; for the man who regards the affairs of life from any other point than his own greedy self, must be queer indeed in the eyes of all who are slaves to their imagined necessities and undisputed desires.

It was evening when he drew nigh the place whither he had directed his steps—a little country town, not far from a famous seat of learning: there he would make inquiry before going further. The minister of his parish knew the minister of Auchars, and had given him a letter of introduction. The country around had not a few dwellings of distinction, and at one or another of these might be children in want of a tutor.

The sun was setting over the hills behind him as he entered the little town. At first it looked but a village, for on the outskirts, through which the king's highway led, were chiefly thatched cottages, with here and there a slated house of one story and an attic; but presently began to appear houses of larger size—few of them, however, of more than two stories. Most of them looked as if they had a long and not very happy history. All at once he found himself in a street, partly of quaint gables with corbel steps

they called them here *corbie-steps*, in allusion, perhaps, to the raven sent out by Noah, for which lazy bird the children regarded these as places to rest. There were two or three curious gateways in it with some attempt at decoration, and one house with the pepper-pot turrets which Scotish architecture has borrowed from the French chateau. The heart of the town was a yet narrower, close-built street, with several short closes and wynds opening out of it—all of which had ancient looking houses. There were shops not a few, but their windows were those of dwellings, as the upper parts of their buildings mostly were. In those shops was as good a supply of the necessities of life as in a great town, and cheaper. You could not get a coat so well cut, nor a pair of shoes to fit you so tight without hurting, but you could get first-rate work. The streets were unevenly paved with round, water-worn stones: Donal was not sorry that he had not to walk far upon them.

The setting sun sent his shadow before him as he entered the place. He kept the middle of the street, looking on this side and that for the hostelry whither he had despatched his chest before leaving home. A gloomy building, apparently uninhabited, drew his attention, and sent a strange thrill through him as his eyes fell upon it. It was of three low stories, the windows defended by iron stanchions, the door studded with great knobs of iron. A little way beyond he caught sight of the sign he was in search of. It swung in front of an old-fashioned, dingy building, with much of the old-world look that pervaded the town. The last red rays of the sun were upon it, lighting up a sorely faded coat of arms. The supporters, two red horses on their hind legs, were all of it he could make out. The crest above suggested a skate, but could hardly have been intended for one. A greedy-eyed man stood in the doorway, his hands in his trouser-pockets. He looked with contemptuous scrutiny at the bare-footed lad approaching him. He had black hair and black eyes; his nose looked as if a heavy finger had settled upon its point, and pressed it downwards: its nostrils swelled wide beyond their base; underneath was a big mouth with a good set of teeth, and a strong upturning chin—an ambitious and greedy face. But ambition is a form of greed.

"A fine day, landlord!" said Donal.

"Ay," answered the man, without changing the posture of one taking his ease against his own door-post, or removing his hands from his pockets, but looking Donal up and down with conscious superiority, then resting his eyes on the bare feet and upturned trousers.

"This'll be the Morven Arms, I'm thinkin'?" said Donal.

"It taksna muckle thoucht to think that," returned the innkeeper, "whan there they hing!"

"Ay," rejoined Donal, glancing up; "there *is* something there—an' it's airms I doobtna; but it's no a'body has the preevilege o' a knowledge o' heraldry like yersel', lan'lord! I'm b'un' to confess, for what I ken they micht be the airms o' ony ane o' ten score Scots faimilies."

There was one weapon with which John Glumm was assailable, and that was ridicule: with all his self-sufficiency he stood in terror of it—and the more covert the ridicule, so long as he suspected it, the more he resented as well as dreaded it. He stepped into the street, and taking a hand from a pocket, pointed up to the sign.

"See til't!" he said. "Dinna ye see the twa reid horse?"

"Ay," answered Donal; "I see them weel eneuch, but I'm nane the wiser nor gien they war twa reid whauls.—Man," he went on, turning sharp round upon the fellow, "ye're no cawpable o' conceivin' the extent o' my ignorance! It's as rampant as the reid horse upo' your sign! I'll yield to naebody i' the amoont o' things I dinna ken!"

The man stared at him for a moment.

"I s' warran'," he said, "ye ken mair nor ye care to lat on!"

"An' what may that be ower the heid o' them?—A crest, ca' ye 't?" said Donal.

"It's a base pearl-beset," answered the landlord.

He had not a notion of what *a base* meant, or *pearl-beset*, yet prided himself on his knowledge of the words.

"Eh," returned Donal, "I took it for a skate!"

"A skate!" repeated the landlord with offended sneer, and turned towards the house.

"I was thinkin' to put up wi' ye the nicht, gien ye could accommodate me at a rizzonable rate," said Donal.

"I dinna ken," replied Glumm, hesitating, with his back to him, between unwillingness to lose a penny, and resentment at the supposed badinage, which was indeed nothing but humour; "what wad ye ca' rizzonable?"

"I wadna grudge a saxpence for my bed; a shillin' I wad," answered Donal.

"Weel, ninepence than—for ye seemna owercome wi' siller."

"Na," answered Donal, "I'm no that. Whatever my burden, yon's no hit. The loss o' what I hae wad hardly mak me lichter for my race."

"Ye're a queer customer!" said the man.

"I'm no sae queer but I hae a kist comin' by the carrier,"

rejoined Donal, "direckit to the Morven Airms. It'll be here in time, doobtless."

"We'll see whan it comes," remarked the landlord, implying the chest was easier invented than believed in.

"The warst o' 't is," continued Donal, "I canna weel shaw mysel' wantin' shune. I hae a pair i' my kist, an' anither upo' my back,—but nane for my feet."

"There's sutors enew," said the innkeeper.

"Weel, we'll see as we gang. I want a word wi' the minister. Wad ye direc' me to the manse?"

"He's frae hame. But it's o' sma' consequence; he disna care aboot tramps, honest man! He winna waur muckle upo' the likes o' you."

The landlord was recovering himself—therefore his insolence.

Donal gave a laugh. Those who are content with what they are, have the less concern about what they seem. The ambitious like to be taken for more than they are, and may well be annoyed when they are taken for less.

"I'm thinkin' *ye* wadna waur muckle on a tramp aither!" he said.

"I wad not," answered Glumm. "It's the pairt o' the honest to discountenance lawlessness."

"Ye wadna hang the puir craturs, wad ye?" asked Donal.

"I wad hang a wheen mair o' them."

"For no haein' a hoose ower their heads? That's some hard! What gien ye was ae day to be in want o' ane yersel'!"

"We'll bide till the day comes.—But what are ye stan'in' there for? Are ye comin' in, or are ye no?"

"It's a some cauld welcome!" said Donal. "I s' jist tak a luik aboot afore I mak up my min'. A tramp, ye ken, needsna stan' upo' ceremony!"

He turned away and walked further along the street.

CHAPTER V.

THE COBBLER.

At the end of the street he came to a low-arched gateway in the middle of a poor-looking house. Within it sat a little bowed man, cobbling diligently at a boot. The sun had left behind him in the west a heap of golden refuse, and cuttings of rose and purple, which shone right in at the archway, and let him see to work.

Here was the very man for Donal! A *respectable* shoemaker would have disdained to patch up the shoes he carried—especially as the owner was in so much need of them.

"It's a bonny nicht," he said.

"Ye may weel mak the remark, sir!" replied the cobbler without looking up, for a critical stitch occupied him. "It's a balmy nicht."

"That's raither a bonny word to put til't!" returned Donal. "There's a kin' o' an air aboot the place I wad hardly hae thoucht balmy! But troth it's no the fau't o' the nicht!"

"Ye're richt there also," returned the cobbler—his use of the conjunction impressing Donal. "Still, the weather has to du wi' the smell—wi' the mair or less o' 't, that is. It comes frae a tanneree nearby. It's no an ill smell to them 'at's used til't; and ye wad hardly believe me, sir, but I smell the clover throuw 't. Maybe I'm preejudized, seein' but for the tan-pits I couldna weel drive my trade; but sittin' here frae mornin' to nicht, I get a kin' o' a habit o' luikin' oot for my blessin's. To recognize an auld blessin' 's 'maist better nor to get a new ane. A pair o' shune weel cobblet 's whiles full better nor a new pair."

"They are that," said Donal; "but I dinna jist see hoo yer seemile applies."

"Isna gettin' on a pair o' auld weel-kent an' weel men'it shune, 'at winna nip yer feet nor yet snocnie, like waukin' up til a blessin' ye hae been haein' for years, only ye didna ken 't for ane?"

As he spoke, the cobbler lifted a little wizened face and a pair of twinkling eyes to those of the student, revealing a soul as original as his own. He was one of the inwardly inseparable, outwardly far divided company of Christian philosophers, among whom individuality as well as patience is free to work its perfect work. In that glance Donal saw a ripe soul looking out of its tent door, ready to rush into the sunshine of the new life.

He stood for a moment lost in eternal regard of the man. He seemed to have known him for ages. The cobbler looked up again.

"Ye'll be wantin' a han' frae me i' my ain line, I'm thinkin'!" he said, with a kindly nod towards Donal's shoeless feet.

"Sma' doobt!" returned Donal. "I had scarce startit, but was ower far to gang back, whan the sole o' ae shue cam aff, an' I had to tramp it wi' baith my ain."

"An' ye thankit the Lord for the auld blessin' o' bein' born an' broucht up wi' soles o' yer ain!"

"To tell the trowth," answered Donal, "I hae sae mony

things to be thankfu' for, it's but sma' won'er I forget mony ane o' them. But noo, an' I thank ye for the exhortation, the Lord's name be praist 'at he gae me feet fit for gangin' upo' !"

He took his shoes from his back, and untying the string that bound them, presented the ailing one to the cobbler.

"That's what we may ca' deith !" remarked the cobbler, slowly turning the invalided shoe.

"Ay, deith it is," answered Donal; "it's a sair divorce o' sole an' body."

"It's a some auld-farrand joke," said the cobbler, "but the fun intil a thing doesna weir oot ony mair nor the poetry or the trowth intil't."

"Who will say there was no providence in the loss of my shoe-sole !" remarked Donal to himself. "Here I am with a friend already !"

The cobbler was submitting the shoes, first the sickly one, now the sound one, to a thorough scrutiny.

"Ye dinna think them worth men'in', I doobt !" said Donal, with a touch of anxiety in his tone.

"I never thoucht that whaur the leather wad haud the steik," replied the cobbler. "But whiles, I confess, I'm jist a wheen tribled to ken hoo to chairge for my wark. It's no barely to consider the time it'll tak me to cloot a pair, but what the weirer 's like to git oot o' them. I canna tak mair nor the job 'ill be worth to the weirer. An' yet the waur the shune, an' the less to be made o' them, the mair time they tak to mak them worth onything ava' !"

"Surely ye oucht to be paid in proportion to your labour."

"I' that case I wad whiles hae to say til a puir body 'at hadna anither pair i' the warl', 'at her ae pair o' shune wasna worth men'in'; an' that wad be a hertbrak, an' sair feet forby, to sic as couldna, like yersel', sir, gang upo' the Lord's ain shune."

"But hoo mak ye a livin' that w'y ?" suggested Donal.

"Hoots, the maister o' the trade sees to my wauges !"

"An' wha may he be ?" asked Donal, well foreseeing the answer.

"He was never cobbler himsel', but he was ance carpenter; an' noo he's liftit up to be heid o' a' the trades. An' there's ae thing he canna bide, an' that's close parin'."

He stopped. But Donal held his peace, waiting; and he went on.

"To them 'at maks little, for reasons good, by their neebour, he gies the better wauges whan they gang hame. To them 'at maks a' 'at they can, he says, 'Ye helpit yersel'; help awa'; ye

hae yer reward. Only comena near me, for I canna bide ye.'—But aboot thae shune o' yours, I dinna weel ken! They're weel eneuch worth duin' the best I can for them; but the morn's Sunday, an' what hae ye to put on?"

"Naething—till my kist comes; an' that, I doobt, winna be afore Monday, or maybe the day efter."

"An' ye winna be able to gang to the kirk!"

"I'm no partic'lar aboot gaein' to the kirk; but gien I wantit to gang, or gien I thoucht I was b'un' to gang, think ye I wad bide at hame 'cause I hadna shune to gang in! Wad I fancy the Lord affrontit wi' the bare feet he made himsel'!"

The cobbler caught up the worst shoe and began upon it at once.

"Ye s' hae't, sir," he said, "gien I sit a' nicht at it! The ane 'll du till Monday. Ye s' hae't afore kirk-time, but ye maun come intil the hoose to get it, for the fowk wud be scunnert to see me workin' upo' the Sabbath-day. They dinna un'erstan' 'at the Maister works Sunday an' Setterday—an' his Father as weel!"

"Ye dinna think, than, there's onything wrang in men'in' a pair o' shune on the Sabbath-day?"

"Wrang!—in obeyin' my Maister, whase is the day, as weel's a' the days? They wad fain tak it frae the Son o' Man, wha's the lord o' 't, but they canna!"

He looked up over the old shoe with eyes that flashed.

"But then—excuse me," said Donal, "—why shouldna ye haud yer face til 't, an' work openly, i' the name o' God?"

"We're telt naither to du oor gude warks afore men to be seen o' them, nor yet to cast oor pearls afore swine. I coont cobblin' your shoes, sir, a far better wark nor gaein' to the kirk, an' I wadna hae't seen o' men. Gien I war warkin' for poverty, it wad be anither thing."

This last Donal did not understand, but learned afterwards what the cobbler meant: the day being for rest, the next duty to helping another was to rest himself. To work for fear of starving would be to distrust the Father, and act as if man lived by bread alone.

"Whan I think o' 't," he resumed after a pause, "bein' Sunday, I'll tak them hame to ye. Whaur wull ye be?"

"That's what I wad fain hae ye tell me," answered Donal. "I had thoucht to put up at the Morven Airms, but there's something I dinna like aboot the lan'lord. Ken ye ony dacent, clean place, whaur they wad gie me a room to mysel', an' no seek mair nor I could pey them?"

"We hae a bit roomie oorsel's," said the cobbler, "at the

service o' ony dacent wayfarin' man that can stan' the smell, an' put up wi' oor w'ys. For peyment, ye can pey what ye think it's worth. We're never varra partic'lar."

"I tak yer offer wi' thankfu'ness," answered Donal.

"Weel, gang ye in at that door jist 'afore ye, an' ye'll see the guidwife—there's nane ither til see. I wad gang wi' ye mysel', but I canna, wi' this shue o' yours to turn intil a Sunday ane!"

Donal went to the door indicated. It stood wide open; for while the cobbler sat outside at his work, his wife would never shut the door. He knocked, but there came no answer.

"She's some dull o' hearin'," said the cobbler, and called her by his own name for her.

"Doory! Doory!" he said.

"She canna be that deif gien she hears ye!" said Donal; for he spoke hardly louder than usual.

"Whan God gies you a wife, may she be ane to hear yer lichtest word!" answered the cobbler.

Sure enough, he had scarcely finished the sentence, when Doory appeared at the door.

"Did ye cry, guidman?" she said.

"Na, Doory: I canna say I cried; but I spak, an' ye, as is yer custom, hearkent til my word!—Here's a believin' lad—I'm thinkin' he maun be a gentleman, but I'm no sure; it's hard for a cobbler to ken a gentleman 'at comes til him wantin' shune; but he may be a gentleman for a' that, an' there's nae hurry to ken. He's welcome to me, gien he be welcome to you. Can ye gie him a nicht's lodgin'?"

"Weel that! an' wi' a' my hert!" said Doory. "He's welcome to what we hae."

Turning, she led the way into the house.

CHAPTER VI.

DOORY.

SHE was a very small, spare woman, in a blue print with little white spots—straight, not bowed like her husband. Otherwise she seemed at first exactly like him. But ere the evening was over, Donal saw there was no featural resemblance between the two faces, and was puzzled to understand how the two expressions

came to be so like: as they sat it seemed in the silence as if they were the same person thinking in two shapes and two places.

Following the old woman, Donal ascended a steep and narrow stair, which soon brought him to a landing where was light, coming mainly through green leaves, for the window in the little passage was filled with plants. His guide led him into what seemed to him an enchanting room—homely enough it was, but luxurious compared to what he had been accustomed to. He saw white walls and a brown-hued but clean-swept wooden floor, on which shone a keen-eyed little fire from a low grate. Two easy chairs, covered with some party-coloured striped stuff, stood one on each side of the fire. A kettle was singing on the hob. The white deal-table was set for tea—with a fat brown teapot, and cups of a gorgeous pattern in bronze, that shone in the firelight like red gold. In one of the walls was a box-bed.

"I'll lat ye see what accommodation we hae at yer service, sir," said Doory, "an' gien that'll shuit ye, ye s' be welcome."

So saying, she opened what looked like the door of a cupboard at the side of the fireplace. It disclosed a neat little parlour, with a sweet air in it. The floor was sanded, and so much the cleaner than if it had been carpeted. A small mahogany table, black with age, stood in the middle. On a side-table covered with a cloth of faded green, lay a large family bible; behind it were a few books and a tea-caddy. In the side of the wall opposite the window, was again a box-bed. To the eyes of the shepherd-born lad, it looked the most desirable shelter he had ever seen. He turned to his hostess and said,

"I'm feart it's ower guid for me. What could ye lat me hae't for by the week? I wad fain bide wi' ye, but whaur an' whan I may get wark I canna tell; sae I maunna tak it ony gait for mair nor a week."

"Mak yersel' at ease till the morn be by," said the old woman. "Ye canna du naething till that be ower. Upo' the Mononday mornin' we s' haud a cooncil thegither—you an' me an' my man: I can du naething wantin' my man; we aye pu' thegither or no at a'."

Well content, and with hearty thanks, Donal committed his present fate into the hands of the humble pair, his heaven-sent helpers; and after much washing and brushing, all that was possible to him in the way of dressing, reappeared in the kitchen. Their tea was ready, and the cobbler seated in the window with a book in his hand, leaving for Donal his easy chair.

"I canna tak yer ain cheir frae ye," said Donal.

"Hoots!" returned the cobbler, "what's onything oors for but to gie the neeper 'at stan's i' need o' 't."

"But ye hae had a sair day's wark!"

"An' you a sair day's traivel!"

"But I'm yoong!"

"An' I'm auld, an' my labour the nearer ower."

"But I'm strong!"

"There's nane the less need ye sud be hauden sae. Sit ye doon, an' wastena yer backbane. My business is to luik to the bodies o' men, an' specially to their puir feet 'at has to bide the weicht, an' get sair pressed therein. Life 's as hard upo' the feet o' a man as upo' ony pairt o' 'm! Whan they gang wrang, there isna muckle to be dune till they be set richt again. I'm sair honourt, I say to mysel' whiles, to be set ower the feet o' men. It's a fine ministration!—full better than bein' a door-keeper i' the hoose o' the Lord! For the feet 'at gang oot an' in at it 's mair nor the door!"

"The Lord be praist!" said Donal to himself; "there's mair i' the warl' like my father an' mither!"

He took the seat appointed him.

"Come to the table, Anerew," said the old woman, "gien sae be ye can pairt wi' that buik o' yours, an' lat yer sowl gie place to yer boady's richts.—I doobt, sir, gien he wad ait or drink gien I wasna at his elbuck."

"Doory," returned her husband, "ye canna deny I gie ye a bit noo an' than, specially whan I come upo' onything by ord'nar' tasty!"

"That ye du, Anerew, or I dinna ken what wud come o' *my* sowl ony mair nor o' *your* boady! Sae ye see, sir, we're like John Sprat an' his wife:—ye'll ken the bairns' say aboot them?"

"Ay, fine that," replied Donal. "Ye couldna weel be better fittit."

"God grant it!" she said. "But we wad fit better yet gien I had but a wheen mair brains."

"The Lord kenned what brains ye had whan he broucht ye thegither," said Donal.

"Ye never uttert a truer word," replied the cobbler. "Gien the Lord be content wi' the brains he's gien ye, an' I be content wi' the brains ye gie me, what richt hae ye to be discontentit wi' the brains ye hae, Doory?—answer me that. But I s' come to the table.—Wud ye alloo me to speir efter yer name, sir?"

"My name 's Donal Grant," replied Donal.

"I thank ye, sir, an' I'll haud it in respec'," returned the cobbler. "Maister Grant wull ye ask a blessin'?"

"I wad raither j'in i' your askin'," replied Donal.

The cobbler said a little prayer, and then they began to eat—first of oat-cakes, baked by the old woman, then of *loaf-breid*, as they called it.

"I'm sorry I hae nae jeally or jam to set afore ye, sir," said Doory; "we're but semple fowk, ye see—content to haud oor earthly taibernacles in a haibitable condition till we hae notice to quit."

"It's a fine thing to ken," said the cobbler, with a queer look, "'at whan ye lea' 't, yer hoose fa's doon, an' ye haena to think o' ony damages to pey—forby 'at gien it laistit ony time efter ye was oot o' 't, there micht be a wheen deevils takin' up their abode intil 't."

"Hoot, Anerew!" interposed his wife, "there's naething like that i' scriptur'!"

"Hoot, Doory!" returned Andrew, "what ken ye aboot what's no i' scriptur'? Ye ken a heap, I alloo, aboot what's *in* scriptur', but ye ken little aboot what's no intil 't!"

"Weel, isna 't best to ken what's intil 't?"

"'Ayont a doobt."

"Weel!" she returned in playful triumph.

Donal saw that he had got hold of a pair of originals: it was a joy to his heart: he was himself an original—one, namely, that lived close to the simplicities of existence!

Andrew Comin, before offering him house-room, would never have asked anyone what he was; but he would have thought it an equal lapse in breeding not to show interest in the history as well as the person of a guest. After a little more talk, so far from commonplace that the common would have found it mirth-provoking, the cobbler said:

"An' what office may ye haud yersel', sir, i' the ministry o' the temple?"

"I think I un'erstan' ye," replied Donal; "my mother says curious things like you."

"Curious things is whiles no that curious," remarked Andrew.

A pause following, he resumed:

"Gien onything gie ye reason to prefar waitin' till ye ken Doory an' me a bit better, sir," he said, "coont my ill-mainnert queston no speirt."

"There's naething," answered Donal. "I'll tell ye onything or a'thing aboot mysel'."

"Tell what ye wull, sir, an' keep what ye wull," said the cobbler.

"I was broucht up a herd-laddie," proceeded Donal, "an'

whiles a shepherd ane. For mony a year I kent mair aboot the hill-side nor the ingle-neuk. But it's the same God an' Father upo' the hill-side an' i' the king's pailace."

"An' ye'll ken a' aboot the win', an' the cloods, an' the w'ys o' God ootside the hoose! I ken something hoo he hauds things gaein' inside the hoose—in a body's hert, I mean—in mine an' Doory's there, but I ken little aboot the w'y he gars things work 'at he's no sae far ben in."

"Ye dinna surely think God fillsna a'thing?" exclaimed Donal.

"Na, na; I ken better nor that," answered the cobbler; "but ye maun alloo a tod's hole 's no sae deep as the thro't o' a burnin' m'untain! God himsel' canna win sae far ben in a shallow place as in a deep place; he canna be sae far ben i' the win's, though he gars them du as he likes, as he is, or sud be, i' your hert an' mine, sir!"

"I see!" responded Donal. "Could that hae been hoo the Lord had to rebuke the win's an' the wawves, as gien they had been gaein' at their ain free wull, i'stead o' the wull o' him 'at made them an' set them gaein'?"

"Maybe; but I wud hae to think aboot it 'afore I answert," replied the cobbler.

A silence intervened. Then said Andrew, thoughtfully,

"I thoucht, when I saw ye first, ye was maybe a lad frae a shop i' the muckle toon—or a clerk, as they ca' them, 'at sits makin' up accoonts."

"Na, I'm no that, I thank God," said Donal.

"What for thank ye God for that?" asked Andrew. "A' place is his. I wudna hae ye thank God ye're no a cobbler like me! Ye micht, though, for it's little ye can ken o' the guid o' the callin'!"

"I'll tell ye what for," answered Donal. "I ken weel toon-fowk think it a heap better to hae to du wi' figures nor wi' sheep, but I'm no o' their min'; an' for ae thing, the sheep's alive. I could weel fancy an angel a shepherd—an' he wad coont my father guid company! Troth, he wad want wings an' airms an' feet an' a' to luik efter the lambs whiles! But gien sic a ane was a clerk in a coontin' hoose, he wad hae to stow awa the wings; I can*not* see what use he wad hae for them there. He micht be an angel a' the time, an' that no a fallen ane, but he bude to lay aside something to fit the place."

"But ye're no a shepherd the noo?" said the cobbler.

"Na," replied Donal, "—'cep' it be I'm set to luik efter anither grade o' lamb. A freen'—ye may 'a' h'ard his name—sir

Gilbert Galbraith—made the beginnin' o' a scholar o' me, an' noo I hae my degree frae the auld university o' Inverdaur."

"Didna I think as muckle!" cried mistress Comin triumphant. "I hadna time to say 't to ye, Anerew, but I was sure he was frae the college, an' that was hoo his feet war sae muckle waur furnisht nor his heid."

"I hae a pair o' shune i' my kist, though—whan that comes!" said Donal, laughing.

"I only houp it winna be ower muckle to win up oor stair!"

"I dinna think it. But we'll lea' 't i' the street afore it s' come 'atween 's!" said Donal. "Gien ye'll hae me, sae lang's I'm i' the toon, I s' gang nae ither gait."

"An' ye'll doobtless read the Greek like yer mither-tongue?" said the cobbler, with a longing admiration in his tone.

"Na, no like that; but weel eneuch to get guid o' 't."

"Weel, that's jist the ae thing I grutch ye—na, no grutch—I'm glaid ye hae't—but the ae thing I wud fain be a scholar for mysel'! To think I kenna a cheep o' the word spoken by the Word himsel'!"

"But the letter o' the word he made little o' comparet wi' the speerit!" said Donal.

"Ay, that's true! an' yet it's whaur a man may weel be greedy, an' want to hae a'thing: wha has the speerit wad fain hae the letter tu! But it disna maitter; I s' set to learnin' 't the first thing whan I gang up the stair—that is, gien it be the Lord's wull."

"Hoots!" said his wife, "what wad ye du wi' Greek up there! I s' warran' the fowk there, ay, an' the maister himsel', speyks plain Scotch! What for no! What wad they du there wi' Greek, 'at a body wad hae to warstle wi' frae mornin' to nicht, an' no mak oot the third pairt o''t!"

Her husband laughed merrily, but Donal said,

"'Deed maybe ye're na sae far wrang, guidwife! I'm thinkin' there maun be a gran' mither-tongue there, 'at 'll soop up a' the lave, an' be better to un'erstan' nor a body's ain—for it'll be yet mair his ain."

"Hear til him!" cried the cobbler, with hearty approbation.

"Ye ken," Donal went on, "a' the languages o' the earth cam, or luik as gien they had come, frae ane, though we're no jist dogsure o' that. There's my mither's ain Gaelic, for enstance: it's as auld, maybe aulder nor the Greek; onygait, it has mair Greek nor Laitin words intil 't, an' ye ken the Greek 's an aulder tongue nor the Laitin. Weel, gien we could work oor w'y back to the auldest grit-gran'mither-tongue o' a', I'm thinkin' it wad come

a kin o' sae easy til 's, 'at, wi' the impruvt faculties o' oor h'avenly condition, we micht be able in a feow days to haud communication wi' ane anither i' that same, ohn stammert or hummt an' hawt."

"But there's been sic a heap o' things fun' oot sin' syne, i' the min' o' man, as weel 's i' the warl' ootside," said Andrew, "that sic a language wad be mair like a bairn's tongue nor a mither's, I'm thinkin', whan set against a' 'at wad be to speyk aboot!"

"Ye're verra richt there, I dinna doobt. But hoo easy wad it be for ilk ane to bring in the new word he wantit, haein' eneuch common afore to explain 't wi'! Afore lang the language wad hae intil 't ilka word 'at was worth haein' in ony language 'at ever was spoken sin' the toor o' Babel."

"Eh, sirs, but it's dreidfu' to think o' haein' to learn sae muckle!" said the old woman. "I'm ower auld an' dottlet!"

Her husband laughed again.

"I dinna see what ye hae to lauch at!" she said, laughing too. "Ye'll be dottlet yersel' gien ye live lang eneuch!"

"I'm thinkin'," said Andrew, "but I dinna ken—'at it maun be a man's ain wyte gien age maks him dottlet. Gien he's aye been haudin' by the trowth, I dinna think he'll fin' the trowth, hasna hauden by him.—But what I was lauchin' at was the thoucht o' onybody bein' auld up there. We'll a' be yoong there, lass!"

"It sall be as the Lord wulls," returned his wife.

"It sall. We want nae mair; an' eh, we want nae less!" responded her husband.

So the evening wore away. The talk was to the very mind of Donal, who never loved wisdom so much as when she appeared in peasant-garb. In that garb he had first known her, and in the form of his mother.

"I won'er," said Doory at length, "'at yoong Eppy 's no puttin' in her appearance! I was sure o' her the nicht: she hasna been near 's a' the week!"

The cobbler turned to Donal to explain. He would not talk of things their guest did not understand; that would be like shutting him out after taking him in!

"Yoong Eppy 's a gran'child, sir—the only ane we hae. She's a weel behavet lass, though ta'en up wi' the things o' this warl' mair nor her grannie an' me could wuss. She's in a place no far frae here—no an easy ane, maybe, to gie satisfaction in, but she's duin' no that ill."

"Hoot, Anerew! she's duin' jist as well as ony lassie o' her years could in justice be expeckit," interposed the grand-

mother. "It's seldom the Lord 'at sets auld heid upo' yoong shoothers."

The words were hardly spoken when a light foot was heard coming up the stair.

"—But here she comes to answer for hersel'!" she added cheerily.

The door of the room opened, and a good-looking girl of about eighteen came in.

"Weel, yoong Eppy, hoo 's a' wi' ye?" said the old man.

The grandmother's name was Elspeth, and the grand-daughter's had therefore always the prefix.

"Brawly, thank ye, gran'father," she answered. "Hoo 's a' wi' yersel'?"

"Ow, weel cobblet!" he replied.

"Sit ye doon," said the grandmother, "by the spark o' fire; the nicht 's some airy like."

"Na, grannie, I want nae fire," said the girl. "I hae run a' the ro'd to get a glimp' o' ye 'afore the week was oot."

"Hoo 's things gaein' up at the castel?"

"Ow, sic-like 's usual—only the hoosekeeper 's some dowy, an' that puts mair upo' the lave o' 's: whan she's weel, she's no ane to spare hersel'—or ither fowk aither!—I wadna care, gien she wud but lippen til a body!" concluded young Eppy, with a toss of her head.

"We maunna speyk evil o' dignities, yoong Eppy!" said the cobbler, with a twinkle in his eye.

"Ca' ye mistress Brookes a dignity, gran'father!" said the girl, with a laugh that was nowise rude.

"I do," he answered. "Isna she ower ye? Haena ye to du as she tells ye? 'Atween her an' you that's eneuch: she's ane o' the dignities spoken o'."

"I winna dispute it. But, eh, it's queer wark yon'er!"

"Tak ye care, yoong Eppy! we maun haud oor tongues aboot things committit til oor trust. Ane peyt to serve in a hoose maunna tre't the affairs o' that hoose as gien they war her ain."

"It wad be weel gien a'body about the hoose was as partic'lar as ye wad hae me, gran'father!"

"Hoo's my lord, lass?"

"Ow, muckle the same—aye up the stair an' doon the stair the forepairt o' the nicht, an' maist inveesible a' day."

The girl cast a shy glance now and then at Donal, as if she claimed him on her side, though the older people must be humoured. Donal was not too simple to understand her: he gave her look no reception. Bethinking himself that they might

have matters to talk about, he rose, and turning to his hostess, said,

"Wi' yer leave, gudewife, I wad gang to my bed. I hae traivelt a maitter o' thirty mile the day upo' my bare feet."

"Eh, sir!" she answered, "I oucht to hae considert that!—Come, yoong Eppy, we maun get the gentleman's bed made up for him."

With a toss of her pretty head, Eppy followed her grandmother to the next room, casting a glance behind her that seemed to ask what she meant by calling a lad without shoes or stockings a gentleman. Not the less readily or actively, however, did she assist her grandmother in preparing the tired wayfarer's couch. In a few minutes they returned, and telling him the room was quite ready for him, Doory added a hope that he would sleep as sound as if his own mother had made the bed.

He heard them talking for a while after the door was closed, but the girl soon took her leave. He was just falling asleep in the luxury of conscious repose, when the sound of the cobbler's hammer for a moment roused him, and he knew the old man was again at work on his behalf. A moment more and he was too fast asleep for any Cyclops' hammer to wake him.

CHAPTER VII.

A SUNDAY.

NOTWITHSTANDING his weariness Donal woke early, for he had slept thoroughly. He rose and dressed himself, drew aside the little curtain that shrouded the window, and looked out. It was a lovely morning. His prospect was the curious old main street of the town. The sun that had shone into it was now shining from the other side, but not a shadow of living creature fell upon the rough stones! Yes—there was a cat shooting across them like the culprit he probably was! If there was a garden to the house, he would go and read in the fresh morning air!

He stole softly through the outer room, and down the stair; found the back-door and a water-butt; then a garden consisting of two or three plots of flowers well cared for; and ended his discoveries with a seat surrounded and almost canopied with honeysuckle, where doubtless the cobbler sometimes smoked his pipe! "Why does he not work here rather than in the arch-

way?" thought Donal. But, dearly as he loved flowers and light and the free air of the garden, the old cobbler loved the faces of his kind better. His prayer for forty years had been to be made like his master; and if that prayer was not answered, how was it that, every year he lived, he found himself loving the faces of his fellows more and more? Ever as they passed, instead of interfering with his contemplations, they gave him more and more to think: were these faces, he asked, the symbols of a celestial language in which God talked to him?

Donal sat down, and took his Greek Testament from his pocket. But all at once, brilliant as was the sun, the light of his life went out, and the vision rose of the gray quarry, and the girl turning from him in the wan moonlight. Then swift as thought followed the vision of the women weeping about the forsaken tomb; and with his risen Lord he rose also—into a region far "above the smoke and stir of this dim spot," a region where life is good even with its sorrow. The man who sees his disappointment beneath him, is more blessed than he who rejoices in fruition. Then prayer awoke, and in the light of that morning of peace he drew nigh the living one, and knew him as the source of his being. Weary with blessedness he leaned against the shadowing honeysuckle, gave a great sigh of content, smiled, wiped his eyes, and was ready for the day and what it should bring. But the bliss went not yet; he sat for a while in the joy of conscious loss in the higher life. With his meditations and feelings mingled now and then a few muffled blows of the cobbler's hammer: he was once more at work on his disabled shoe.

"Here is a true man!" he thought, "—a Godlike helper of his fellow!"

When the hammer ceased, the cobbler was stitching; when Donal ceased thinking, he went on feeling. Again and again came a little roll of the cobbler's drum, giving glory to God by doing his will: the sweetest and most acceptable music is that which rises from work a doing; its incense ascends as from the river in its flowing, from the wind in its blowing, from the grass in its growing. All at once he heard the voices of two women in the next garden, close behind him, talking together.

"Eh," said one, "there's that godless cratur, An'rew Comin, at his wark again upo' the Sawbath mornin'!"

"Ay, lass," answered the other, "I hear him! Eh, but it 'll be an ill day for him whan he has to appear afore the jeedge o' a'! *He* winna hae his comman'ments broken that gait!"

"Troth, na!" returned the former; "it'll be a sair sattlin day for *him!*"

Donal rose, and looking about him, saw two decent, elderly women on the other side of the low stone wall. He was approaching them with the request on his lips to know which of the Lord's commandments they supposed the cobbler to be breaking, when, seeing that he must have overheard them, they turned their backs and walked away.

And now his hostess, having discovered he was in the garden, came to call him to breakfast—the simplest of meals—porridge, with a cup of tea after it because it was Sunday, and there was danger of sleepiness at the kirk.

"Yer shune 's waitin' ye, sir," said the cobbler. "Ye'll fin' them a better job nor ye expeckit. They're a better job, onygait, nor *I* expeckit!"

Donal made haste to put them on, and felt dressed for the Sunday.

"Are ye gaein' to the kirk the day, Anerew?" asked the old woman, adding, as she turned to their guest, "My man's raither pecooliar aboot gaein' to the kirk! Some days he'll gang three times, an' some days he winna gang ance!—He kens himsel' what for!" she added with a smile, whose sweetness confessed that, whatever was the reason, it was to her the best in the world.

"Ay, I'm gaein' the day: I want to gang wi' oor new freen'," he answered.

"I'll tak him gien ye dinna care to gang," rejoined his wife.

"Ow, I'll gang!" he persisted. "It'll gie's something to talk aboot, an' sae ken ane anither better, an' maybe come a bit nearer ane anither, an' sae a bit nearer the maister. That's what we're here for—comin' an' gaein'."

"As ye please, Anerew! What's richt to you's aye richt to me. O' my ain sel' I wad be doobtfu' o' sic a rizzon for gaein' to the kirk—to get something to speyk aboot."

"It's a gude rizzon whaur ye haena a better," he answered. "It's aften I get at the kirk naething but what angers me—lees an' lees agen my Lord an' my God. But whan there's ane to talk it ower wi', ane 'at has some care for God as weel's for himsel', there's some guid sure to come oot o' 't—some revelation o' the real richteousness—no what fowk 'at gangs by the ministers ca's richteousness.—Is yer shune comfortable to yer feet, sir?"

"Ay, that they are! an' I thank ye: they're full better nor new."

"Weel, we winna hae worship this mornin'; whan ye gang to the kirk it's like aitin' mair nor's guid for ye."

"Hoots, Anerew! ye dinna think a body can hae ower muckle

o' the word!" said his wife, anxious as to the impression he might make on Donal.

"Ow na, gien a body tak it in, an' disgeist it! But it's no a bonny thing to hae the word stickin' about yer moo', an' baggin' oot yer pooches, no to say lyin' cauld upo' yer stamack, an' it for the life o' men. The less ye tak abune what ye put in practice the better; an' gien the thing said hae naething to du wi' practice, the less ye heed it the better.—Gien ye hae dune yer brakfast, sir, we'll gang—no 'at it's freely kirk-time yet, but the Sabbath 's 'maist the only day I get a bit o' a walk, an' gien ye hae nae objection til a turn aboot the Lord's muckle hoose afore we gang intil his little ane—we ca' 't his, but I doobt it—I'll be ready in a meenute."

Donal willingly agreed, and the cobbler, already clothed in part of his Sunday best, a pair of corduroy trousers of a mouse colour, having indued an ancient tail-coat of blue with gilt buttons, they set out together; and for their conversation, it was just the same as it would have been any other day: where every day is not the Lord's, the Sunday is his least of all.

They left the town, and were soon walking in meadows through which ran a clear river, shining and speedy in the morning sun. Its banks were largely used for bleaching, and the long lines of white in the lovely green of the natural grass were pleasant both to eye and mind. All about, the rooks were feeding in peace, knowing their freedom that day from the persecution to which, like all other doers of good, they are in general exposed. Beyond the stream lay a level plain stretching towards the sea, divided into numberless fields, and dotted with farmhouses and hamlets. On the side where the friends were walking, the ground was more broken, rising in places into small hills, many of them wooded. Half a mile away was one of a conical shape, on whose top towered a castle. Old and gray and sullen, it lifted itself from the foliage around it like a great rock from a summer sea, and stood out against the clear blue sky of the June morning. The hill was covered with wood, mostly rather young, but at the bottom were some ancient firs and beeches. At the top, round the base of the castle, the trees were chiefly delicate birches with moonlight skin, and feathery larches not thriving over well.

"What ca' they yon castel?" questioned Donal. "It maun be a place o' some importance!"

"They maistly ca' 't jist the castel," answered the cobbler. "Its auld name 's Graham's Grip. It's lord Morven's place, an' they ca' 't Castel Graham: the faimily-name 's Graham, ye ken. They ca' themsel's Graeme-Graham—jist twa w'ys o' spellin' the name putten thegither. The last lord, no upo' the main brainch,

they tell me, spelled his name wi' the diphthong, an' wasna willin' to gie't up a'thegither—sae tuik the twa o' them. Yon 's whaur yoong Eppy 's at service.—An' that min's me, sir, ye haena tellt me yet what kin' o' a place ye wad hae yersel.' It's no 'at a puir body like me can help, but it's aye weel to lat fowk ken what ye're efter. A word gangs speirin' lang efter it's oot o' sicht—an' the answer may come frae far. The Lord whiles brings aboot things i' the maist oonlikly fashion."

"I'm ready for onything I'm fit to do," said Donal; "but I hae had what's ca'd a good education—though I hae learned mair frae my ain needs than frae a' my buiks; sae i wad raither till the human than the earthly soil, takin' mair interest i' the schoolmaister's craps than i' the fairmer's."

"Wad ye objec' to maister ane by himsel'—or maybe twa?"

"Na, surely—gien I saw mysel' fit."

"Eppy mentiont last nicht 'at there was word aboot the castel o' a tutor for the yoongest. Hae ye ony w'y o' approachin' the place?"

"Not till the minister comes home," answered Donal. "I have a letter to him."

"He'll be back by the middle o' the week, I hear them say."

"Can you tell me anything about the people at the castle?" asked Donal.

"I could," answered Andrew; "but some things is better f'un' oot nor kenned 'afore han'. Ilka place has its ain shape, an' maist things has to hae some parin' to gar them fit. That's what I tell yoong Eppy—mony 's the time!"

Here came a pause, and when Andrew spoke again, it seemed on a new line.

"Did it ever occur to ye, sir," he said, "'at maybe deith micht be the first waukin' to some fowk?"

"It has occurrt to me," answered Donal; "but mony things come intil a body's heid 'at he's no able to think oot! They maun lie an' bide their time."

"Lat nane o' the lovers o' law an' letter perswaud ye the Lord wadna hae ye think—though nane but him 'at obeys can think wi' safety. We maun do first the thing 'at we ken, an' syne we may think aboot the thing 'at we dinna ken. I fancy 'at whiles the Lord wadna say a thing jist no to stop fowk thinkin' aboot it. He was aye at gettin' them to mak use o' the can'le o' the Lord. It's my belief the main obstacles to the growth o' the kingdom are first the oonbelief o' believers, an' syne the w'y 'at they lay doon the law. 'Afore they hae learnt the rudimen's o' the trowth themsel's, they begin to lay the grievous burden o' their dullness an'

ill-conceived notions o' holy things upo' the min's an' consciences o' their neebours, fain, ye wad think, to haud them frae growin' ony mair nor themsel's. Eh, man, but the Lord 's won'erfu'! Ye may daur an' daur, an' no come i' sicht o' 'im!"

The church stood a little way out of the town, in a churchyard overgrown with grass, which the wind blew like a field of corn. Many of the stones were out of sight in it. The church, a relic of old catholic days, rose out of it like one that had taken to growing and so got the better of his ills. They walked into the musty, dingy, brown-atmosphered house. The cobbler led the way to a humble place behind a pillar; there Doory was seated waiting them. The service was not so dreary to Donal as usual; the sermon had some thought in it; and his heart was drawn to a man who would say he did not understand.

"Yon was a fine discoorse," remarked the cobbler as they went homeward.

Donal saw nothing *fine* in it, but his experience was not so wide as the cobbler's: to him the discourse had hinted many things which had not occurred to Donal.

Some people demand from the householder none but new things, others none but old; whereas we need in truth of all the sorts in his treasury.

"I haena a doobt it was a' richt an' as ye say, Anerew," said his wife; "but for mysel' I could mak naither heid nor tail o' 't."

"I saidna, Doory, it was a' richt," returned her husband; "that would be to say a heap for onything human! but it was a guid honest sermon."

"What was yon 'at he said aboot the mirracles no bein' teeps?" asked his wife.

"It was God's trowth 'at he said."

"Gie me a share o' the same, I beg o' ye, Anerew Comin."

"What the man said was this—'at the sea 'at Peter gaed oot upo' wasna first an' foremost to be luikit upon as a teep o' the inward an' spiritual troubles o' the believer, still less o' the troubles o' the church o' Christ. The Lord deals wi' fac's nane the less 'at they canna help bein' teeps. Here was terrible fac's to Peter. Here was angry watter an' roarin' win'; here was danger an' fear: the man had to trust or gang doon. Gien the hoose be on fire we maun trust; gien the watter gang ower oor heids we maun trust; gien the horse rin awa', we maun trust. Him 'at canna trust in siclike conditions, I wadna gie a plack for ony ither kin' o' faith he may hae. God 's nae a mere thoucht i' the warl' o' thoucht, but a leevin' pooer in a' warl's alike. Him 'at gangs to God wi' a sair heid 'ill the suner gang til 'im wi' a sair hert; an' them 'at thinksna

he cares for the pains o' their bodies 'ill ill believe he cares for the doobts an' perplexities o' their inquirin' speerits. To my min' he spak the best o' sense!"

"I didna hear him say onything like that!" said Donal.

"Did ye no? Weel, I thoucht it cam frae him to me!"

"Maybe I wasna giein' the best heed," said Donal. "But what ye say is as true as the sun. It stan's to rizzon."

The day passed in pleasure and quiet. Donal had found another father and mother.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE GATE.

THE next day, after breakfast, Donal said to his host—

"Noo I maun pey ye for my shune, for gien I dinna pey at ance, I canna tell hoo muckle to ca' my ain, an' what I hae to gang by till I get mair."

"Na, na," returned the cobbler. "There's jist ae preejudice I hae left concernin' the Sawbath-day; I firmly believe it a preejudice, for siller 's the Lord's tu, but I canna win ower 't: I canna bring mysel' to tak siller for ony wark dune upo' 't! Sae ye maun jist be content to lat that flee stick to the Lord's wa'. Ye'll du as muckle for me some day!"

"There's naething left me but to thank ye," said Donal. "There's the ludgin' an' the boord, though!—I maun ken aboot them 'afore we gang farther."

"They're nane o' my business," replied Andrew. "I lea' a' that to the gudewife, an' I coonsel ye to du the same. She's a capital manager, an' winna chairge ye ower muckle."

Donal could but yield, and presently went out for a stroll.

He wandered along the bank of the river till he came to the foot of the hill on which stood the castle. Seeing a gate, he approached it, and finding it open went in. A slow-ascending drive went through the trees, round and round the hill. He followed it a little way. An aromatic air now blew and now paused as he went. The trees seemed climbing up to attack the fortress above, which he could not see. When he had gone a few yards out of sight of the gate, he threw himself down among them, and fell into a reverie. The ancient time arose before him, when, without a tree to cover the approach of an enemy, the castle rose defiant and bare in its strength, like an athlete stripped for the

fight, and the little town huddled close under its protection. What wars had there blustered, what rumours blown, what fears whispered, what sorrows moaned! But were there not now just as many evils as then? Let the world improve as it may, the deeper ill only breaks out afresh in new forms. Time itself, the staring, vacant, unlovely time, is to many the one dread foe. Others have a house empty and garnished, in which neither Love nor Hope dwells. A self, with no God to protect from it, a self unrulable, insatiable, makes of existence to some the hell called madness. Godless man is a horror of the unfinished—a hopeless necessity for the unattainable! The most discontented are those who have all the truthless heart desires.

Thoughts like these were coming and going in Donal's brain, when he heard a slight sound somewhere near him—the lightest of sounds indeed—the turning of the leaf of a book. He raised his head and looked, but could see no one. At last, up through the tree-boles on the slope of the hill, he caught the shine of something white: it was the hand that held an open book. He took it for the hand of a lady. The trunk of a large tree hid the reclining form. He would go back! There was the lovely cloth-striped meadow to lie in!

He rose quietly, but not quietly enough to steal away. From behind the tree, a young man, rather tall and slender, rose and came towards him. Donal stood to receive him.

"I presume you are unaware that these grounds are not open to the public!" he said, not without a touch of haughtiness.

"I beg your pardon, sir," said Donal. "I found the gate open, and the shade of the trees was enticing."

"It is of no consequence," returned the youth, now with some condescension; "only my father is apt to be annoyed if he sees any one——"

He was interrupted by a cry from farther up the hill—

"Oh, there you are, Percy!"

"And there you are, Davie!" returned the youth kindly.

A boy of about ten came towards them precipitately, jumping stumps, and darting between stems.

"Take care, take care, Davie!" cried the other: "you may slip on a root and fall!"

"Oh, I know better than that!—But you are engaged!"

"Not in the least. Come along."

Donal lingered: the youth had not finished his speech!

"I went to Arkie," said the boy, "but she couldn't help me. I can't make sense of this! I wouldn't care if it wasn't a story."

He had an old folio under one arm, with a finger of the other hand in its leaves.

"It is a curious taste for a child!" said the youth, turning to Donal, in whom he had recognized the peasant-scholar: "this little brother of mine reads all the dull old romances he can lay his hands on."

"Perhaps," suggested Donal, "they are the only fictions within his reach! Could you not turn him loose upon sir Walter Scott?"

"A good suggestion!" he answered, casting a keen glance at Donal.

"Will you let me look at the passage?" said Donal to the boy, holding out his hand.

The boy opened the book, and gave it him. On the top of the page Donal read, "The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia." He had read of the book, but had never seen it.

"That's a grand book!" he said.

"Horribly dreary," remarked the elder brother.

The younger reached up, and laid his finger on the page next him.

"There, sir!" he said; "that is the place: do tell me what it means."

"I will try," answered Donal; "I may not be able."

He began to read at the top of the page.

"That's not the place, sir!" said the boy. "It is there."

"I must know something of what goes before it first," returned Donal.

"Oh, yes, sir; I see!" he answered, and stood silent.

He was a fair-haired boy, with ruddy cheeks and a healthy look —sweet-tempered evidently.

Donal presently saw both what the sentence meant and the cause of his difficulty. He explained the thing to him.

"Thank you! thank you! Now I shall get on!" he cried, and ran up the hill.

"You seem to understand boys!" said the brother.

"I have always had a sort of ambition to understand ignorance."

"Understand ignorance?"

"You know what queer shapes the shadows of the plainest things take: I never seem to understand any thing till I understand its shadow."

The youth glanced keenly at Donal.

"I wish I had had a tutor like you!" he said.

"Why?" asked Donal.

"I should have done better.—Where do you live?"

Donal told him he was lodging with Andrew Comin, the cobbler. A silence followed.

"Good morning!" said the youth.

"Good morning, sir!" returned Donal, and went away.

CHAPTER IX.

THE MORVEN ARMS.

On Wednesday evening Donal went to *The Morven Arms* to inquire for the third time if his box was come. The landlord said, if a great heavy tool-chest was the thing he expected, it had come.

"*Donal Grant* wad be the name upo' 't," said Donal.

"'Deed, I didna luik," said the landlord. "It's i' the back yard."

As Donal went through the house to the yard, he passed the door of a room where some of the townsfolk sat, and heard the earl mentioned.

He had not asked Andrew anything about the young man he had spoken with; for he understood that his host held himself not at liberty to talk about the family in which his granddaughter was a servant. But what was said in public he surely might hear! He requested the landlord to let him have a bottle of ale, and went into the room and sat down.

It was a decent parlour with a sanded floor. Those assembled were a mixed company from town and country, having a tumbler of whisky-toddy together after the market. One of them was a stranger who had been receiving from the others various pieces of information concerning the town and its neighbourhood.

"I min' the auld man weel," a wrinkled gray-haired man was saying as Donal entered, "—a varra different man frae this present. He wud sit doon as ready as no—that wud he—wi' ony puir body like mysel', an' gie him his cracks, an' hear his news, an' drink his glaiss, an' mak naething o' 't. But this man, haith! wha ever saw him cheenge word wi' brither man?"

"I never h'ard hoo he came to the teetle: they say he was but some far awa' cousin!" remarked a farmer-looking man, florid and stout.

"Hoots! he was ain brither to the last yerl, wi' richt to the tectle, though nane to the property. That he's but takin' care o' till his niece come o' age. He was a heap aboot the place afore

his brither dee'd, an' they war freen's as weel 's brithers. They say 'at the lady Arctoora—h'ard ye ever sic a hathenish name for a lass!—is b'un' to merry the yoong lord. There 's a sicht o' clapper-clash aboot the place, an' the fowk, an' their strange w'ys. They tell me nane can be said to ken the yerl but his ain man. For mysel' I never cam i' their coonsel—no' even to the buyin' or sellin' o' a lamb."

"Weel," said a fair-haired, pale-faced man, "we ken frae scriptur 'at the sins o' the fathers is veesitit upo' the children to the third an' fourth generation—an' wha can tell?"

"Wha can tell," rejoined another, who had a judicial look about him, in spite of an unshaven beard, and a certain general disregard to appearances, "wha can tell but the sins o' *oor* faithers may be lyin' upo' some o' oorsel's at this varra moment?"

"In oor case, I canna see the thing wad be fair," said a fifth: "we dinna even ken what they did!"

"We're no to interfere wi' the wull o' the Almichty," rejoined the former. "It gangs its ain gait, an' mortal canna tell what that gait is. His justice winna be contert."

Donal felt that to be silent now would be to decline witnessing. He feared argument, lest he should fail and wrong the right, but he must not therefore hang back. He drew his chair towards the table.

"Wad ye lat a stranger put in a word, freen's?" he said.

"Ow ay, an' welcome! We setna up for the men o' Gotham."

"Weel, I wad spier a question gien I may."

"Speir awa'. Answer I winna insure," said the man unshaven.

"Weel, wad ye please tell me what ye ca' the justice o' God?"

"Onybody could tell ye that: it consists i' the punishment o' sin. He gies ilka sinner what his sin deserves."

"That seems to me an unco ae-sidit definition o' justice."

"Weel, what wad *ye* mak o' 't?"

"I wad say justice means *fair play;* an' the justice o' God lies i' this, 'at he gies ilka man, beast, an' deevil, fair play."

"I'm doobtfu' aboot that!" said a drover-looking fellow. "We maun gang by the word; an' the word says he veesits the ineequities o' the fathers upo' the children to the third an' fourth generation: I never could see the fair play o' that!"

"Dinna ye meddle wi' things, John, 'at ye dinna un'erstan'; ye may wauk i' the wrang box!" said the old man.

"I want to un'erstan'," returned John. "I'm no sayin' he disna du richt; I'm only sayin' I canna see the fair play o' 't."

"It may weel be richt an' you no see 't!"

"Ay, weel that! But what for sud I no say I dinna see 't? Isna the blin' man to say he's blin'?"

This was unanswerable, and Donal again spoke.

"It seems to me," he said, "we need first to un'erstan' what's conteened i' the veesitin' o' the sins o' the fathers upo' the children, afore we daur ony jeedgment concernin' 't."

"Ay, that 's sense eneuch!" confessed a responsive murmur.

"I haena seen muckle o' this warl' yet, compared wi' you, sirs," Donal went on, "but I hae been a heap my lane wi' nowt an' sheep, whan a heap o' things gaed throuw my heid; an' I hae seen something as weel, though no that muckle. I hae seen a man, a' his life 'afore a douce honest man, come til a heap o' siller, an' gang to the dogs!"

A second murmur seemed to indicate corroboration.

"He gaed a' to the dogs, as I say," continued Donal; "an' the bairns he left 'ahint him whan he dee'd o' drink, cam upo' the perris, or wad hae hungert but for some 'at kenned him whan he was yet in honour an' poverty. Noo, wad ye no say this was a veesitin' o' the sins o' the father upo' the children?"

"Ay, doobtless!"

"Weel, whan I h'ard last aboot them, they were a' like eneuch to turn oot honest lads an' lasses."

"Ow, I daursay!"

"An' what micht ye think the probability gien they had come intil a lot o' siller whan their father dee'd?"

"Maybe they micht hae gane the same gait he gaed!"

"Was there injustice than, or was there favour i' that veesitation o' the sins o' their father upo' them?"

There was no answer. The toddy went down their throats and the smoke came out of their mouths, but no one dared acknowledge it might be a good thing to be born poor instead of rich. So entirely was the subject dropped that Donal feared he had failed to make himself understood. He did not know the general objection to talking of things on eternal principles. We set up for judges of right while our very selves are wrong! He saw that he had cast a wet blanket over the company, and judged it better to take his leave.

Borrowing a wheelbarrow, he trundled his chest home, and unpacking it in the archway, carried his books and clothes to his room.

CHAPTER X.

THE PARISH CLERGYMAN.

THE next day, Donal put on his best coat, and went to call on the minister. Shown into the study, he saw seated there the man he had met on his first day's journey, the same who had parted from him in such displeasure. He presented his letter.

Mr. Carmichael gave him a keen glance, but uttered no word until he had read it.

"Well, young man," he said, looking up at him with concentrated severity, "what would you have me do?"

"Tell me of any situation you may happen to know or hear of, sir," said Donal. "That is all I could expect."

"*All!*" repeated the clergyman, with something very like a sneer; "—but what if I think that *all* a very great deal? What if I imagine myself set in charge over young minds and hearts? What if I know you better than the good man whose friendship for your parents gives him a kind interest in you? You little thought how you were undermining your prospects last Friday! My old friend would scarcely have me welcome to my parish one he may be glad to see out of his own! You can go to the kitchen and have your dinner—I have no desire to render evil for evil—but I will not bid you God-speed. And the sooner you take yourself out of this, young man, the better!"

"Good morning, sir!" said Donal, and left the room.

On the doorstep he met a youth he had known by sight at the university: it was the minister's son—the worst-behaved of all the students. Was this a case of the sins of the father being visited on the child? Does God never visit the virtues of the father on the child?

A little ruffled, and not a little disappointed, Donal walked away. Almost unconsciously he took the road to the castle, and coming to the gate, leaned on the top bar, and stood thinking.

Suddenly, down through the trees came Davie bounding, pushed his hand through between the bars, and shook hands with him.

"I have been looking for you all day," he said.

"Why?" asked Donal.

"Forgue sent you a letter."

"I have had no letter."

"Eppy took it this morning."

"Ah, that explains! I have not been home since breakfast."

"It was to say my father would like to see you."

"I will go and get it: then I shall know what to do."

"Why do you live there? The cobbler is a dirty little man! Your clothes will smell of leather!"

"He is not dirty," said Donal. "His hands do get dirty—very dirty with his work—and his face too; and I daresay soap and water can't get them quite clean. But he will have a nice earth-bath one day, and that will take all the dirt off. And if you could see his soul—that is as clean as clean can be—so clean it is quite shining!"

"Have you seen it?" said the boy, looking up at Donal, unsure whether he was making game of him, or meaning something very serious.

"I have had a glimpse or two of it. I never saw a cleaner.—You know, my dear boy, there's a cleanness much deeper than the skin!"

"I know!" said Davie, but stared as if he wondered he would speak of such things.

Donal returned his gaze. Out of the fullness of his heart his eyes shone. Davie was reassured.

"Can you ride?" he asked.

"Yes, a little."

"Who taught you?"

"An old mare I was fond of."

"Ah, you are making game of me! I do not like to be made game of," said Davie, and turned away.

"No indeed," replied Donal. "I never make game of anybody.—But now I will go and find the letter."

"I would go with you," said the boy, "but my father will not let me beyond the grounds. I don't know why."

Donal hastened home, and found himself eagerly expected, for the letter young Eppy had brought was from the earl. It informed Donal that it would give his lordship pleasure to see him, if he would favour him with a call.

In a few minutes he was again on the road to the castle.

CHAPTER XI.

THE EARL.

He met no one on his way from the gate up through the wood. He ascended the hill with its dark ascending firs, up to its crown of silvery birches, above which, as often as the slowly circling road brought him to the other side, he saw rise like a helmet the gray mass of the fortress. Turret and tower, pinnacle and battlement, appeared and disappeared as he climbed. Not until at last he stood almost on the top, and from an open space beheld nearly the whole front, could he tell what it was like. It was a grand pile, but looked a gloomy one to live in.

He stood on a broad grassy platform, from which rose a gravelled terrace, and from the terrace the castle. He ran his eye along the front seeking a door, but saw none. Ascending the terrace by a broad flight of steps, he approached a deep recess in the front, where two portions of the house of differing date nearly met. Inside this recess he found a rather small door, flush with the wall, thickly studded and plated with iron, surmounted by the Morven horses carved in gray stone, and surrounded with several mouldings. Looking for some means of announcing his presence, he saw a handle at the end of a rod of iron, and pulled, but heard nothing: the sound of the bell was smothered in a wilderness of stone walls. By and by, however, appeared an old servant, bowed and slow, with plentiful hair white as wool, and a mingled look of childishness and caution in his wrinkled countenance.

"The earl wants to see me," said Donal.

"What name?" said the man.

"Donal Grant; but his lordship will be nothing the wiser, I suspect; I don't think he knows my name. Tell him—the young man he sent for to Andrew Comin's."

The man left him, and Donal began to look about him. The place where he stood was a mere entry, a cell in huge walls, with a second, a low, round-headed door, like the entrance to a prison, by which the butler had disappeared. There was nothing but bare stone around him, with again the Morven arms cut deep into it on one side. The ceiling was neither vaulted nor groined nor flat, but seemed determined by the accidental concurrence of ends of stone stairs and corners of floors on different levels.

It was full ten minutes before the man returned and requested him to follow him.

Immediately Donal found himself in a larger and less irregular stone-case, adorned with heads and horns and skins of animals. Crossing this, the man opened a door covered with red cloth, which looked strange in the midst of the cold hard stone, and Donal entered an octagonal space, its doors of dark shining oak, with carved stone lintels and doorposts, and its walls adorned with arms and armour almost to the domed ceiling. Into it, as if it descended suddenly out of some far height, but dropping at last like a gently alighting bird, came the end of a turnpike-stair, of slow sweep and enormous diameter—such a stair as in wildest gothic tale he had never imagined. Like the revolving centre of a huge shell, it went up out of sight, with plain promise of endless convolutions beyond. It was of ancient stone, but not worn as would have been a narrow stair. A great rope of silk, a modern addition, ran up along the wall for a hand-rail; and with slow-moving withered hand upon it, up the glorious ascent climbed the serving man, suggesting to Donal's eye the crawling of an insect, to his heart the redemption of the sons of God.

With the stair yet ascending above them as if it would never stop, the man paused upon a step no broader than the rest, and opening a door in the round of the well, said, "Mr. Grant, my lord," and stood aside for Donal to enter.

He found himself in the presence of a tall, bowed man, with a large-featured white face, thin and worn, and a deep-sunken eye that gleamed with an unhealthy life. His hair was thin, but covered his head, and was only streaked with gray. His hands were long and thin and white; his feet in large shoes, looking the larger that they came out from narrow trousers, which were of shepherd-tartan. His coat was of light-blue, with a high collar of velvet, and much too wide for him. A black silk neckerchief tied carelessly about his throat, and a waistcoat of pineapple shawl-stuff, completed his dress. On one long little finger shone a stone which Donal took for an emerald. He motioned his visitor to a seat, and went on writing, with a rudeness more like that of a successful contractor than a nobleman. But it gave Donal the advantage of becoming a little accustomed to his surroundings. The room was not large, was wainscoted, and had a good many things on the walls: Donal noted two or three riding whips, a fishing rod, several pairs of spurs, a sword with golden hilt, a strange looking dagger like a flame of fire, one or two old engravings, and what seemed a plan of the estate. At the one window, small, with a stone mullion, the summer sun

was streaming in. The earl sat in its flood, and in the heart of it seemed cold and bloodless. He looked about sixty years of age, and as if he rarely or never smiled. Donal tried to imagine what a smile would do for his face, but failed. He was not in the least awed by the presence of the great man. What is rank to the man who honours everything human, has no desire to look what he is not, has nothing to conceal and nothing to compass, is fearful of no to-morrow, and does not respect riches! Toward such ends of being the tide of Donal's life was at least setting. So he sat neither fidgeting nor staring, but quietly taking things in.

The earl raised himself, pushed his writing from him, turned towards him, and said with courtesy,

"Excuse me, Mr. Grant; I wished to talk to you with the ease of duty done."

More polite his address could not have been, but there was a something between him and Donal that was not to be passed a—nameless gulf of the negative.

"My time is at your lordship's service," replied Donal, with the ease that comes of simplicity.

"You have probably guessed why I sent for you?"

"I have hoped, my lord."

There was something of old-world breeding about the lad that commended him to the earl. Such breeding is not rare among Celt-born peasants.

"My sons told me that they had met a young man in the grounds——"

"For which I beg your lordship's pardon," said Donal. "I did not know the place was forbidden."

"I hope you will soon be familiar with it. I am glad of your mistake. From what they said, I supposed you might be a student in want of a situation, and I had been looking out for a young man to take charge of the boy: it seemed possible you might serve my purpose. I do not question you can show yourself fit for such an office: I presume it would suit you. Do you believe yourself one to be so trusted?"

Donal had not a glimmer of false modesty; he answered immediately,

"I do, my lord."

"Tell me something of your history: where were you born? what were your parents?"

Donal told him all he thought it of any consequence he should know.

His lordship did not once interrupt him with question or remark. When he had ended—

"Well," he said, "I like all you tell me. You have testimonials?"

"I have from the professors, my lord, and one from the minister of the parish, who knew me before I went to college. I could get one from Mr. Sclater too, whose church I attended while there."

"Show me what you have," said his lordship.

Donal took the papers from the pocket book his mother had made him, and handed them to him. The earl read them with some attention, returning each to him without remark as he finished it, only saying with the last,

"Quite satisfactory."

"But," said Donal, "there is one thing I should be more at ease if I told your lordship: Mr. Carmichael, the minister of this parish, would tell you I was an atheist, or something very like it—therefore an altogether unsafe person. But he knows nothing of me."

"On what grounds then would he say so?" asked the earl—showing not the least discomposure. "I thought you were a stranger to this place!"

Donal told him how they had met, what had passed between them, and how the minister had behaved in consequence. His lordship heard him gravely, was silent for a moment, and then said,

"Should Mr. Carmichael address me on the subject, which I do not think likely, he will find me already too much prejudiced in your favour. But I can imagine his mistaking your freedom of speech: you are scarcely prudent enough. Why say all you think?"

"I fear nothing, my lord."

The earl was silent; his gray face seemed to grow grayer, but it might be that just then the sun went under a cloud, and he was suddenly folded in shadow. After a moment he spoke again.

"I am quite satisfied with you so far, Mr. Grant; and as I should not like to employ you in direct opposition to Mr. Carmichael—not that I belong to his church—we will arrange matters before he can hear of the affair. What salary do you want?"

Donal replied he would prefer leaving the salary to his lordship's judgment upon trial.

"I am not a wealthy man," returned his lordship, "and would prefer an understanding."

"Try me then for three months, my lord; give me my board and lodging, the use of your library, and at the end of the quarter

a ten-pound-note: by that time you will be able to tell whether I suit you."

The earl nodded agreement, and Donal rose at once. With a heart full of thankfulness and hope he walked back to his friends. He had before him pleasant work; plenty of time and book-help; an abode full of interest; and something for his labour!

"'Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee!'" said the cobbler, rejoicing against the minister; "'the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain.'"

In the afternoon Donal went into the town to get some trifles he wanted before going to the castle. As he turned to the door of a draper's shop, he saw at the counter the minister talking to him. He would rather have gone elsewhere but for unwillingness to turn his back on anything: he went in. Beside the minister stood a young lady, who, having completed her purchases, was listening to their conversation. The draper looked up as he entered. A glance passed between him and the minister. He came to Donal, and having heard what he wanted, left him, went back to the minister, and took no more notice of him. Donal found it awkward, and left the shop.

"High an' michty!" said the draper, annoyed at losing the customer to whose dispraise he had been listening.

"Far beyond dissent, John!" said the minister, pursuing a remark.

"Doobtless, sir, it is that!" answered the draper. "I'm thankfu' to say I never harboured a doobt mysel', but aye took what I was tauld, ohn argle-barglet. What hae we sic as yersel' set ower's for, gien it binna to haud's i' the straicht path o' what we're to believe an' no to believe? It's a fine thing no to be accoontable!"

The minister was an honest man so far as he knew himself and honesty, and did not relish this form of submission. But he did not ask himself where was the difference between accepting the word of man and accepting man's explanation of the word of God! He took a huge pinch from his black snuffbox and held his peace.

In the evening Donal would settle his account with mistress Comin: he found her demand so much less than he had expected, that he expostulated. She was firm, however, and assured him she had gained, not lost. As he was putting up his things,

"Lea' a buik or twa, sir," she said, "'at whan ye luik in, the place may luik hame-like. We s' ca' the room yours. Come as aften as ye can. It does my Anerew's hert guid to hae a crack wi' ane 'at kens something o' what the Maister wad be at. Mony

ane 'll ca' him Lord, but feow 'ill tak the trible to ken what he wad hae o' them. But there's my Anerew—he'll sit yon'er at his wark, thinkin' by the hoor thegither ower something the Maister said 'at he canna win at the richts o'. 'Depen' upo' 't,' he says whiles, 'depen' upo' 't, lass, whaur onything he says disna luik richt to hiz, it maun be 'at we haena won at it!'"

As she ended, her husband came in, and took up what he fancied the thread of the dialogue.

"An' what are we to think o' the man," he said, "at's content no to un'erstan' what *he* was at the trible to say? Wad he say things 'at he didna mean fowk to un'erstan' whan he said them?"

"Weel, Anerew," said his wife, "there's mony a thing he said 'at I can *not* un'erstan'; naither am I muckle the better for your explainin' o' the same; I maun jist lat it sit."

Andrew laughed his quiet pleased laugh.

"Weel, lass," he said, "the duin' o' ae thing 's better nor the un'erstan'in' o' twenty. Nor wull ye be lang ohn un'erstan't muckle 'at's dark to ye noo; for the maister likes nane but the duer o' the word, an' her he likes weel. Be blythe, lass; ye s' hae yer fill o' un'erstan'in' yet!"

"I'm fain to believe ye speyk the trowth, Anerew!"

"It 's great trowth," said Donal.

CHAPTER XII.

THE CASTLE.

THE next morning came a cart from the castle to fetch his box; and after breakfast he set out for his new abode.

He took the path by the river-side. The morning was glorious. The sun and the river and the birds were jubilant, and the wind gave life to everything. It rippled the stream, and fluttered the long webs bleaching in the sun: they rose and fell like white waves on the bright green lake; and women, homely Nereids of the grassy sea, were besprinkling them with spray. There were dull sounds of wooden machinery near, but they made no discord with the sweetness of the hour, speaking only of activity, not labour. From the long bleaching meadows by the river-side rose the wooded base of the castle. Donal's bosom swelled with delight; then came a sting: was he already forgetting his inextinguishable grief? "But," he answered himself, "God is more to me than

any woman! When he puts joy in my heart, shall I not be glad? When he calls my name shall I not answer?"

He stepped out joyfully, and was soon climbing the hill. He was again admitted by the old butler.

"I will show you at once," he said, "how to go and come at your own will."

He led him through doors and along passages to a postern opening on a little walled garden at the east end of the castle.

"This door," he said, "is, you observe, at the foot of Baliol's tower, and in that tower is your room; I will show it you."

He led the way up a spiral stair that might almost have gone inside the newel of the great staircase. Up and up they went, until Donal began to wonder, and still they went up.

"You're young, sir," said the butler, "and sound of wind and limb; so you'll soon think nothing of it."

"I never was up so high before, except on a hill-side," returned Donal. "The college-tower is nothing to this!"

"In a day or two you'll be shooting up and down it like a bird. I used to do so myself. I got into the way of keeping a shoulder foremost, and screwing up as if I was a blob of air! Old age does make fools of us!"

"You don't like it then?"

"No, I do not: who does?"

"It's only that you get spent as you go up. The fresh air at the top of the stair will soon revive you," said Donal.

But his conductor did not understand him.

"That's all very well so long as you're young; but when it has got you, you'll pant and grumble like the rest of us."

In the distance Donal saw Age coming slowly after him, to claw him in his clutch, as the old song says. "Please God," he thought, "by the time he comes up, I'll be ready to try a fall with him! O Thou eternally young, the years have no hold on thee; let them have none on thy child. I too shall have life eternal."

Ere they reached the top of the stair, the man halted and opened a door. Donal entering saw a small room, nearly round, a portion of the circle taken off by the stair. On the opposite side was a window projecting from the wall, whence he could look in three different directions. The wide country lay at his feet. He saw the winding road by which he had ascended, the gate by which he had entered, the meadow with its white stripes through which he had come, and the river flowing down. He followed it with his eyes:—lo, there was the sea, shining in the sun like a diamond shield! It was but the little German Ocean, yet one with the great world-ocean. He turned to his conductor.

"Yes," said the old man, answering his look, "it's a glorious sight! When first I looked out there I thought I was in eternity."

The walls were bare even of plaster; he could have counted the stones in them; but they were dry as a bone.

"You are wondering," said the old man, "how you are to keep warm in the winter! Look here: you shut this door over the window! See how thick and strong it is! There is your fireplace; and for fuel, there's plenty below! It *is* a labour to carry it up, I grant; but if I was you, I would set to o' nights when nobody was about, and carry till I had a stock laid in!"

"But," said Donal, "I should fill up my room. I like to be able to move about a little!"

"Ah," replied the old man, "you don't know what a space you have up here all to yourself! Come this way."

Two turns more up the stair, and they came to another door. It opened into wide space: from it Donal stepped on a ledge or bartizan, without any parapet, that ran round the tower, passing above the window of his room. It was well he had a steady brain, for he found the height affect him more than that of a precipice on Glashgar: doubtless he would get used to it, for the old man had stepped out without the smallest hesitation! Round the tower he followed him.

On the other side a few steps rose to a watch-tower—a sort of ornate sentry-box in stone, where one might sit and regard with wide vision the whole country. Avoiding this, another step or two led them to the roof of the castle—of great stone slabs. A broad passage ran between the rise of the roof and a battlemented parapet. By this time they came to a flat roof, on to which they descended by a few steps. Here stood two rough sheds, with nothing in them.

"There's stowage!" said the old man.

"Yes, indeed!" answered Donal, to whom the idea of his aerie was growing more and more agreeable. "But would there be no objection to my using the place for such a purpose?"

"What objection?" returned his guide. "I doubt if a single person but myself knows it."

"And shall I be allowed to carry up as much as I please?"

"I allow you," said the butler, with importance. "Of course you will not waste—I am dead against waste! But as to what is needful, use your freedom.—Dinner will be ready for you in the schoolroom at seven."

At the door of his room the old man left him, and after listening for a moment to his descending steps, Donal re-entered his chamber.

Why they put him so apart, Donal never asked himself; that he should have such command of his leisure as this isolation promised him was a consequence very satisfactory. He proceeded at once to settle himself in his new quarters. Finding some shelves in a recess of the wall, he arranged his books upon them, and laid his few clothes in the chest of drawers beneath. He then got out his writing material, and sat down.

Though his window was so high, the warm pure air came in full of the aromatic odours rising in the hot sunshine from the young pine trees far below, and from a lark far above descended news of heaven-gate. The scent came up and the song came down all the time he was writing to his mother—a long letter. When he had closed and addressed it, he fell into a reverie. Apparently he was to have his meals by himself: he was glad of it: he would be able to read all the time! But how was he to find the schoolroom! Some one would surely fetch him! They would remember he did not know his way about the place! It wanted yet an hour to dinner-time when, finding himself drowsy, he threw himself on his bed, where presently he fell fast asleep.

The night descended, and when he came to himself, its silences were deep around him. It was not dark: there was no moon, but the twilight was clear. He could read the face of his watch: it was twelve o'clock! No one had missed him! He was very hungry! But he had been hungrier before and survived it! In his wallet were still some remnants of oat-cake! He took it in his hand, and stepping out on the bartizan, crept with careful steps round to the watch-tower. There he seated himself in the stone chair, and ate his dry morsels in the starry presences. Sleep had refreshed him, and he was wide awake, yet there was on him the sense of a strange existence. Never before had he so known himself! Often had he passed the night in the open air, but never before had his night-consciousness been such! Never had he felt the same way alone. He was parted from the whole earth, like the ship-boy on the giddy mast! Nothing was below but a dimness; the earth and all that was in it was massed into a vague shadow. It was as if he had died and gone where existence was independent of solidity and sense. Above him was domed the vast of the starry heavens; he could neither flee from it nor ascend to it! For a moment he felt it the symbol of life, yet an unattainable hopeless thing. He hung suspended between heaven and earth, an outcast of both, a denizen of neither! The true life seemed ever to retreat, never to await his grasp. Nothing but the beholding of the face of the Son of Man could set him at rest as to its reality; nothing less than the assurance from his own

mouth could satisfy him that all was true, all well: life was a thing so essentially divine, that he could not know it in itself till his own essence was pure! But alas, how dream-like was the old story! Was God indeed to be reached by the prayers, affected by the needs of men? How was he to feel sure of it? Once more, as often heretofore, he found himself crying into the great world to know whether there was an ear to hear. What if there should come to him no answer? How frightful then would be his loneliness! But to seem not to be heard might be part of the discipline of his darkness! It might be for the perfecting of his faith that he must not yet know how near God was to him!

"Lord," he cried, "eternal life is to know thee and thy Father; I do not know thee and thy Father; I have not eternal life; I have but life enough to hunger for more: show me plainly of the Father whom thou alone knowest."

And as he prayed, something like a touch of God seemed to begin and grow in him till it was more than his heart could hold, and the universe about him was not large enough to hold in its hollow the heart that swelled with it.

"God is enough," he said, and sat in peace.

CHAPTER XIII.

A SOUND.

All at once came to his ear through the night a strange something. Whence or what it was he could not even conjecture. Was it a moan of the river from below? Was it a lost music-tone that had wandered from afar and grown faint? Was it one of those mysterious sounds he had read of as born in the air itself, and not yet explained of science? Was it the fluttered skirt of some angelic song of lamentation?—for if the angels rejoice, they surely must lament! Or was it a stifled human moaning? Was any wrong being done far down in the white-gleaming meadows below, by the banks of the river whose platinum-glimmer he could descry through the molten amethystine darkness of the starry night?

Presently came a long-drawn musical moan: it must be the sound of some muffled instrument! Verily night was the time for strange things! Could sounds be begotten in the fir trees by the

rays of the hot sun, and born in the stillness of the following dark, as the light which the diamond receives in the day glows out in the gloom? There are parents and their progeny that never exist together!

Again the sound—hardly to be called sound! It resembled a vibration of organ-pipe too slow and deep to affect the hearing; only this rather seemed too high, as if only his soul heard it. He would steal softly down the dumb stone-stair! Some creature might be in trouble and needing help!

He crept back along the bartizan. The stair was dark as the very heart of the night. He groped his way down. The spiral stair is the safest of all: you cannot tumble far ere brought up by the inclosing cylinder. Arrived at the bottom, and feeling about, he could not find the door to the outer air which the butler had shown him; it was wall wherever his hands fell. He could not find again the stair he had left; he could not tell in what direction it lay.

He had got into a long windowless passage connecting two wings of the house, and in this he was feeling his way, fearful of falling down some stair or trap. He came at last to a door—low-browed like almost all in the house. Opening it—was it a thinner darkness or the faintest gleam of light he saw? And was that again the sound he had followed, fainter and farther off than before—a downy wind-wafted plume from the skirt of some stray harmony? At such a time of the night surely it was strange! It must come from one who could not sleep, and was solacing himself with sweet sounds, breathing a soul into the uncompanionable silence! If so it was, he had no right to search farther! But how was he to return? He dared hardly move, lest he should be found wandering over the house in the dead of night like a thief, or one searching after its secrets. He must sit down and wait for the morning: its earliest light would perhaps enable him to find his way to his quarters!

Feeling about him a little, his foot struck against the step of a stair. Examining it with his hands, he believed it the same he had ascended in the morning: even in a great castle, could there be two such royal stairs? He sat down upon it, and leaning his head on his hands, composed himself to a patient waiting for the light.

Waiting pure is perhaps the hardest thing for flesh and blood to do well. The relations of time to mind are very strange. Some of their phenomena seem to prove that time is only of the mind—belonging to the intellect as good and evil belong to the spirit. Anyhow, if it were not for the clocks of the universe, one

man would live a year, a century, where another would live but a day. But the mere motion of time, not to say the consciousness of *empty* time, is fearful. It is this empty time that the fool is always trying to kill · his effort should be to fill it. Yet nothing but the living God can fill it—though it be but the shape our existence takes to us. Only where he is, emptiness is not. Eternity will be but an intense present to the child with whom is the Father.

Such thoughts alighted, flitted, and passed, for the first few moments, through the mind of Donal, as he sat half consciously waiting for the dawn. It was thousands of miles away, over the great round of the sunward-turning earth! His imagination woke, and began to picture the great hunt of the shadows, fleeing before the arrows of the sun, over the broad face of the mighty world—its mountains, seas, and plains in turn confessing the light, and submitting to him who slays for them the haunting demons of their dark. Then again the moments were the small cogs on the wheels of time, whereby the dark castle in which he sat was rushing ever towards the light: the cogs were caught and the wheels turned swiftly, and the time and the darkness sped. He forgot the labour of waiting. If now and then he fancied a tone through the darkness, it was to his mind the music-march of the morning to his rescue from the dungeon of the night.

But that was no musical tone which made the darkness shudder around him! He sprang to his feet. It was a human groan—a groan as of one in dire pain, the pain of a soul's agony. It seemed to have descended the stair to him. The next instant Donal was feeling his way up—cautiously, as if on each succeeding step he might come against the man who had groaned. Tales of haunted houses rushed into his memory. What if he were but pursuing the groan of an actor in the past—a creature the slave of his own conscious memory—a mere haunter of the present which he could not influence—one without physical relation to the embodied, save in the groans he could yet utter! But it was more in awe than in fear that he went. Up and up he felt his way, all about him as still as darkness and the night could make it. A ghostly cold crept through his skin; it was drawn together as by a gently freezing process; and there was a pulling at the muscles of his chest, as if his mouth were being dragged open by a martingale.

As he felt his way along the wall, sweeping its great endless circle round and round in spiral ascent, all at once his hand seemed to go through it; he started and stopped. It was the door of the room into which he had been shown to meet the earl!

It stood wide open. A faint glimmer came through the window from the star-filled sky. He stepped just within the doorway. Was not that another glimmer on the floor—from the back of the room—through a door he did not remember having seen yesterday? There again was the groan, and nigh at hand! Some one must be in sore need! He approached the door and looked through. A lamp, nearly spent, hung from the ceiling of a small room which might be an office or study, or a place where papers were kept. It had the look of an antechamber, but that it could not be, for there was but the one door!—In the dim light he descried a vague form leaning up against one of the walls, as if listening to something through it! As he gazed it grew plainer to him, and he saw a face, its eyes staring wide, which yet seemed not to see him. It was the face of the earl. Donal felt as if in the presence of the disembodied; he stood fascinated, nor made attempt to retire or conceal himself. The figure turned its face to the wall, put the palms of its hands against it, and moved them up and down, and this way and that; then looked at them, and began to rub them against each other.

Donal came to himself. He concluded it was a case of sleep-walking. He had read that it was dangerous to wake the sleeper, but that he seldom came to mischief when left alone, and was about to slip away as he had come, when the faint sound of a far-off chord crept through the silence. The earl again laid his ear to the wall. But there was only silence. He went through the same dumb show as before, then turned as if to leave the place. Donal turned also, and hurriedly felt his way to the stair. Then first he was in danger of terror; for in stealing through the darkness from one who could find his way without his eyes, he seemed pursued by a creature not of this world. On the stair he went down a step or two, then lingered, and heard the earl come on it also. He crept close to the newel, leaving the great width of the stair free, but the steps of the earl went upward. Donal descended, sat down again at the bottom of the stair, and began again to wait. No sound came to him through the rest of the night. The slow hours rolled away, and the slow light drew nearer. Now and then he was on the point of falling into a doze, but would suddenly start wide awake, listening through a silence that seemed to fill the whole universe and deepen around the castle.

At length he was aware that the darkness had, unobserved of him, grown weaker—that the approach of the light was sickening it: the dayspring was about to take hold of the ends of the earth that the wicked might be shaken out of its lap. He sought the long passage by which he had come, and felt his way to the other

end: it would be safer to wait there if he could get no farther. But somehow he came to the foot of his own stair, and sped up as if it were the ladder of heaven. He threw himself on his bed, fell fast asleep, and did not wake till the sun was high.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE SCHOOLROOM.

Old Simmons, the butler, woke him.

"I was afraid something was the matter, sir. They tell me you did not come down last night; and breakfast has been waiting you two hours."

"I should not have known where to find it," said Donal. "The knowledge of an old castle is not intuitive."

"How long will you take to dress?" asked Simmons.

"Ten minutes, if there is any hurry," answered Donal.

"I will come again in twenty; or, if you are willing to save an old man's bones, I will be at the bottom of the stair at that time to take charge of you. I would have looked after you yesterday, but his lordship was poorly, and I had to be in attendance on him till after midnight."

Donal thought it impossible he should of himself have found his way to the schoolroom. With all he could do to remember the turnings, he found the endeavour hopeless, and gave it up with a not unpleasing despair. Through strange passages, through doors in all directions, up stairs and down they went, and at last came to a long, low room, barely furnished, with a pleasant outlook, and immediate access to the open air. The windows were upon a small grassy court, with a sundial in the centre; a door opened on a paved court. At one end of the room a table was laid with ten times as many things as he could desire to eat, though he came to it with a good appetite. The butler himself waited upon him. He was a good-natured old fellow, with a nose somewhat too red for the ordinary wear of one in his responsible position.

"I hope the earl is better this morning," said Donal.

"Well, I can't say. He's but a delicate man is the earl, and has been, so long as I have known him. He was with the army in India, and the sun, they say, give him a stroke, and ever since he have headaches that bad! But in between he seems pretty

well, and nothing displeases him more than ask after his health, or how he slep the night. But he's a good master, and I hope to end my days with him. I'm not one as likes new faces and new places! One good place is enough for me, says I—so long as it is a good one.—Take some of this game pie, sir."

Donal made haste with his breakfast, and to Simmons's astonishment had ended when he thought him just well begun.

"How shall I find master Davie?" he asked.

"He is wild to see you, sir. When I've cleared away, just have the goodness to ring this bell out of that window, and he'll be with you as fast as he can lay his feet to the ground."

Donal rang the handbell. A shout mingled with the clang of it. Then came the running of swift feet over the stones of the court, and Davie burst into the room.

"Oh, sir," he cried, "I *am* glad! It is good of you to come!"

"Well, you see, Davie," returned Donal, "everybody has got to do something to carry the world on a bit: my work is to help make a man of you. Only I can't do much except you help me; and if I find I am not making a good job of you, I shan't stop many hours after the discovery. If you want to keep me, you must mind what I say, and so help me to make a man of you."

"It will be long before I am a man!" said Davie rather disconsolately.

"It depends on yourself. The boy that is longest in becoming a man, is the boy that thinks himself a man before he is a bit like one."

"Come then, let us do something!" said Davie.

"Come away," rejoined Donal. "What shall we do first?"

"I don't know: you must tell me, sir."

"What would you like best to do—I mean if you might do what you pleased?"

Davie thought a little, then said:

"I should like to write a book."

"What kind of a book?"

"A beautiful story."

"Isn't it just as well to read such a book? Why should you want to write one?"

"Because then I should have it go just as I wanted it! I am always—*almost* always—disappointed with the thing that comes next. But if I wrote it myself, then I shouldn't get tired of it; it would be what pleased me, and not what pleased somebody else."

"Well," said Donal, after thinking for a moment, "suppose you begin to write a book!"

"Oh, that will be fun!—much better than learning verbs and nouns!"

"But the verbs and nouns are just the things that go to make a story—with not a few adjectives and adverbs, and a host of conjunctions; and, if it be a very moving story, a good many interjections! These all you have got to put together with good choice, or the story will not be one you would care to read.—Perhaps you had better not begin till I see whether you know enough about those verbs and nouns to do the thing decently. Show me your school-books."

"There they all are—on that shelf! I haven't opened one of them since Percy came home. He laughed at them all, and so Arkie—that's lady Arctura, told him he might teach me himself. And he wouldn't; and she wouldn't—with him to laugh at her. And I've had such a jolly time ever since—reading books out of the library! Have you seen the library, Mr. Grant?"

"No; I've seen nothing yet. Suppose we begin with a holiday, and you begin by teaching me!"

"Teaching you, sir! I'm not able to teach you!"

"Why, didn't you as much as offer to teach me the library? Can't you teach me this great old castle? And aren't you going to teach yourself to me?"

"That *would* be a funny lesson, sir!"

"The least funny, the most serious lesson you could teach me! You are a book God has begun, and he has sent me to help him go on with it; so I must learn what he has written already before I try to do anything."

"But you know what a boy is, sir! Why should you want to learn me?"

"You might as well say that, because I have read one or two books, I must know every book. To understand one boy helps to understand another, but every boy is a new boy, different from every other boy, and every one has to be understood."

"Yes—for sometimes Arkie won't hear me out, and I feel so cross with her I should like to give her a good box on the ear. What king was it, sir, that made the law that no lady, however disagreeable, was to have her ears boxed? Do you think it a good law, sir?"

"It is good for you and me anyhow."

"And when Percy says, 'Oh, go away! don't bother,' I feel as if I could hit him hard! Yet, if I happen to hurt him, I am so sorry! and why then should I want to hurt him?"

"There's something in this little fellow!" said Donal to himself. "Ah, why indeed?" he answered. "You see you don't understand yourself yet!"

"No indeed!"

"Then how could you think I should understand you all at once?—and a boy must be understood, else what's to become of him! Fancy a poor boy living all day, and sleeping all night, and nobody understanding him!"

"That would be dreadful! But you *will* understand me?"

"Only a little: I'm not wise enough to understand any boy."

"Then—but isn't that what you said you came for?—I thought——"

"Yes," answered Donal, "that is what I came for; but if I fancied I *quite* understood any boy, that would be a sure sign I did not understand him.—There is one who understands every boy as well as if there were no other boy in the whole world."

"Then why doesn't every boy go to him when he can't get fair play?"

"Ah, why? That is just what I want you to do. He can do better than give you fair play even: he can make you give other people fair play, and delight in it."

"Tell me where he is."

"That is what I have to teach you: mere telling is not much use. Telling is what makes people think they know when they do not, and makes them foolish."

"What is his name?"

"I will not tell you that just yet; for then you would think you knew him, when you knew next to nothing about him. Look here; look at this book," he went on, pulling a copy of Boethius from his pocket; "look at the name on the back of it: it is the name of the man that wrote the book."

Davie spelled it out.

"Now you know all about the book, don't you?"

"No, sir; I don't know anything about it."

"Well then, my father's name is Robert Grant: you know now what a good man he is!"

"No, I don't. I *should* like to see him though!"

"You would love him if you did! But you see now that knowing the name of a person does not make you know the person."

"But you said, sir, that if you told me the name of that person, I should fancy I knew all about him: I don't fancy I know all about your father now you have told me his name!"

"You have me there!" answered Donal. "I did not say

quite what I ought to have said. I should have said that when we know a little about a person, and are used to hearing his name, then we are ready to think we know all about him. I heard a man the other day—a man who had never spoken to your father—talk as if he knew all about him."

"I think I understand," said Davie.

To confess ignorance is to lose respect with the ignorant who would appear to know. But there is a worse thing than to lose the respect even of the wise—to deserve to lose it; and that he does who would gain a respect that does not belong to him. But a confession of ignorance is a ground of respect with a well-bred child, and even with many ordinary boys will raise a man's influence: they recognize his loyalty to the truth. Act-truth is infinitely more than fact-truth; the love of the truth infinitely beyond the knowledge of it.

They went out together, and when they had gone the round of the place outside, Davie would have taken him over the house; but Donal said they would leave something for another time, and made him lie down for ten minutes. This the boy thought a great hardship, but Donal saw that he needed to be taught to rest. Ten times in those ten minutes he was on the point of jumping up, but Donal found a word sufficient to restrain him. When the ten minutes were over, he set him an addition sum. The boy protested he knew all the rules of arithmetic.

"But," said Donal, "I must *know* that you know them; that is my business. Do this one, however easy it is."

The boy obeyed, and brought him the sum—incorrect.

"Now, Davie," said Donal, "you said you knew all about addition, but you have not done this sum correctly."

"I have only made a blunder, sir."

"But a rule is no rule if it is not carried out. Everything goes on the supposition of its being itself, and not something else. People that talk about good things without doing them are left out. You are not master of addition until your addition is to be depended upon."

The boy found it hard to fix his attention: to fix it on something he did not yet understand, would be too hard! he must learn to do so in the pursuit of accuracy where he already understood! then he would not have to fight two difficulties at once—that of understanding, and that of fixing his attention. But for a long time he never kept him more than a quarter of an hour at work on the same thing.

When he had done the sum correctly, and a second without need of correction, he told him to lay his slate aside, and he would

tell him a fairy-story. Therein he succeeded tolerably—in the opinion of Davie, wonderfully: what a tutor was this, who let fairies into the school-room!

The tale was of no very original construction—the youngest brother gaining in the path of righteousness what the elder brothers lose through masterful selfishness. A man must do a thing because it is right, even if he die for it; but truth were poor indeed if it did not bring at last all things subject to it! As beauty and truth are one, so are truth and strength one. Must God be ever on the cross, that we poor worshippers may pay him *our* highest honour? Is it not enough to know that if the devil were the greater, yet would not God do him homage, but would hang for ever on his cross? Truth is joy and victory. The true hero is adjudged to bliss, nor can in the nature of things, that is, of God, escape it. He who holds by life and resists death, must be victorious; his very life is a slaying of death. A man may die for his opinion, and may only be living to himself: a man who dies for the truth, dies to himself and to all that is not true.

"What a beautiful story!" cried Davie when it ceased. "Where did you get it, Mr. Grant?"

"Where all stories come from."

"Where is that?"

"The Think-book."

"What a funny name! I never heard it! Will it be in the library?"

"No; it is in no library. It is the book God is always writing at one end, and blotting out at the other. It is made of thoughts, not words. It is the Think-book."

"Now I understand! You got the story out of your own head!"

"Yes, perhaps. But how did it get into my head?"

"I can't tell that. Nobody can tell that!"

"Nobody can that never goes up above his own head—that never shuts the Think-book, and stands upon it. When one does, then the Think-book swells to a great mountain and lifts him up above all the world: then he sees where the stories come from, and how they get into his head.—Are you to have a ride to-day?"

"I ride or not just as I like."

"Well, we will now do just as we both like, I hope, and it will be two likes instead of one—that is, if we are true friends."

"We shall be true friends—that we shall!"

"How can that be—between a little boy like you, and a grown man like me?"

"By me being good."

"By both of us being good—no other way. If one of us only was good, we could never be true friends. I must be good as well as you, else we shall never understand each other!"

"How kind you are, Mr. Grant! You treat me just like another one!" said Davie.

"But we must not forget that I am the big one and you the little one, and that we can't be the other one to each other except the little one does what the big one tells him! That's the way to fit into each other."

"Oh, of course!" answered Davie, as if there could not be two minds about that.

CHAPTER XV.

HORSE AND MAN.

DURING the first day and the next, Donal did not even come in sight of any other of the family; but on the third day, after their short early school—for he seldom let Davie work till he was tired, and never after—going with him through the stable-yard, they came upon lord Forgue as he mounted his horse—a nervous, fiery, thin-skinned thoroughbred. The moment his master was on him, he began to back and rear. Forgue gave him a cut with his whip. He went wild, plunging and dancing and kicking. The young lord was a horseman in the sense of having a good seat; but he knew little about horses; they were to him creatures to be compelled, not friends with whom to hold sweet concert. He had not learned that to rule ill is worse than to obey ill. Kings may be worse than it is in the power of any subject to be. As he was raising his arm for a second useless, cruel, and dangerous blow, Donal darted to the horse's head.

"You mustn't do that, my lord!" he said. "You'll drive him mad."

But the worst part of Forgue's nature was uppermost, in his rage all the vices of his family rushed to the top. He looked down on Donal with a fury checked only by contempt.

"Keep off," he said, "or it will be the worse for you. What do you know about horses?"

"Enough to know that you are not fair to him. I will *not* let you strike the poor animal. Just look at this water-chain!"

"Hold your tongue, and stand away, or, by——"

"Ye winna fricht me, sir," said Donal, whose English would, for years, upon any excitement, turn cowardly and run away, leaving his mother-tongue to bear the brunt, "—I'm no timorsome."

Forgue brought down his whip with a great stinging blow upon Donal's shoulder and back. The fierce blood of the highland Celt rushed to his brain, and had not the man in him held by God and trampled on the devil, there might then have been miserable work. But though he clenched his teeth, he fettered his hands, and ruled his tongue, and the Master of men was master still.

"My lord," he said, after one instant's thunderous silence, "there's that i' me wad think as little o' throttlin' ye as ye du o' ill-usin' yer puir beast. But I'm no gaein' to drop his quarrel, an' tak up my ain: that wad be cooardly." Here he patted the creature's neck, and recovering his composure and his English, went on. "I tell you, my lord, the curb-chain is too tight! The animal is suffering as you can have no conception of, or you would pity him."

"Let him go," cried Forgue, "or I will make you."

He raised his whip again, the more enraged that the groom stood looking on with his mouth open.

"I tell your lordship," said Donal, "it is my turn to strike; and if you hit the animal again before that chain is slackened, I will pitch you out of the saddle."

For answer Forgue struck the horse over the head. The same moment he was on the ground; Donal had taken him by the leg and thrown him off. He was not horseman enough to keep his hold of the reins, and Donal led the horse a little way off, and left him to get up in safety. The poor animal was pouring with sweat, shivering and trembling, yet throwing his head back every moment. Donal could scarcely undo the chain; it was twisted—his lordship had fastened it himself—and sharp edges pressed his jaw at the least touch of the rein. He had not yet rehooked it, when Forgue was upon him with a second blow of his whip. The horse was scared afresh at the sound, and it was all he could do to hold him, but he succeeded at length in calming him. When he looked about him, Forgue was gone. He led the horse into the stable, put him in his stall, and proceeded to unsaddle him. Then first he was re-aware of the presence of Davie. The boy was stamping—with fierce eyes and white face—choking with silent rage.

"Davie, my child!" said Donal, and Davie recovered his power of speech.

"I'll go and tell my father!" he said, and made for the stable door.

"Which of us are you going to tell upon?" asked Donal with a smile.

"Percy, of course!" he replied, almost with a scream. "You are a good man, Mr. Grant, and he is a bad fellow. My father will give it him well. He doesn't often—but oh, can't he just! To dare to strike you! I'll go to him at once, whether he's in bed or not!"

"No, you won't, my boy! Listen to me. Some people think it's a disgrace to be struck: I think it a disgrace to strike. I have a right over your brother by that blow, and I mean to keep it—for his good. You didn't think I was afraid of him?"

"No, no; anybody could see you weren't a bit afraid of him. *I* would have struck him again if he had killed me for it!"

"I don't doubt you would. But when you understand, you will not be so ready to strike. I could have killed your brother more easily than held his horse. You don't know how strong I am, or what a blow of my fist would be to a delicate fellow like that. I hope his fall has not hurt him."

"I hope it has—a little, I mean, only a little," said the boy, looking in the face of his tutor. "But tell me why you did not strike him. It would be good for him to be well beaten."

"It will, I hope, be better for him to be well forgiven: he will be ashamed of himself the sooner, I think. But why I did not strike him was, that I am not my own master."

"But my father, I am sure, would not have been angry with you. He would have said you had a right to do it."

"Perhaps; but the earl is not the master I mean."

"Who is, then?"

"Jesus Christ."

"O—oh!"

"He says I must not return evil for evil, a blow for a blow. I don't mind what people say about it: *he* would not have me disgrace myself! He never even threatened those that struck *him*."

"But he wasn't a man, you know!"

"Not a man! What was he then?"

"He was God, you know."

"And isn't God a man—and ever so much more than a man?"

The boy made no answer, and Donal went on.

"Do you think God would have his child do anything disgraceful? Why, Davie, you don't know your own Father! What

God wants of us is to be down-right honest, and do what he tells us without fear."

Davie was silent. His conscience reproved him, as the conscience of a true-hearted boy will reprove him at the very mention of the name of God, until he sets himself consciously to do his will. Donal said no more, and they went for their walk.

CHAPTER XVI.

COLLOQUIES.

In the evening Donal went to see Andrew Comin.

"Weel, hoo are ye gettin' on wi' the yerl?" asked the cobbler.

"You set me a good example of saying nothing about him," answered Donal; "and I will follow it—at least till I know more: I have scarce seen him yet."

"That's right!" returned the cobbler with satisfaction. "I'm thinkin' ye'll be ane o' the feow 'at can rule their ane hoose—that is, haud their ain tongues till the hoor for speech be come. Stick ye to that, my dear sir, an' mair i'll be weel nor in general is weel."

"I'm come to ye for a bit o' help though; I want licht upon a queston 'at 's lang triblet me.—What think ye?—hoo far does the comman' laid upo' 's, as to warfare 'atween man an' man, reach? Are we never ta raise the han' to human bein', think ye?"

"Weel, I hae thoucht a heap aboot it, an' I daurna say 'at I'm jist absolute clear upo' the maitter. But there may be pairt clear whaur a' 's no clear; an' by what we un'erstan' we come the nearer to what we dinna un'erstan'. There's ae thing unco plain —'at we're on no accoont to return evil for evil: onybody 'at ca's himsel' a Christian maun un'erstan' that muckle. We're to gie no place to revenge, inside or oot. Therefore we're no to gie blow for blow. Gien a man hit ye, ye're to take it i' God's name. But whether things mayna come to a p'int whaurat ye're bu'n', still i' God's name, to defen' the life God has gien ye, I canna say—I haena the licht to justifee me in denyin' 't. There maun surely, I hae said to mysel', be a time whan a man may hae to du what God dis sae aften—mak use o' the strong han'! But it's clear he maunna do 't in rage—that's ower near hate—an' hate 's the deevil's ain. A man may, gien he live varra near the Lord, be whiles angry ohn sinned: but the wrath o' man worketh not the

richteousness o' God; an' the wrath that rises i' the mids o' encoonter, is no like to be o' the natur o' divine wrath. To win at it, gien 't be possible, lat's consider the Lord—hoo he did. There's no word o' him ever liftin' han' to protec' himsel'. The only thing like it was for ithers. To gar them lat his disciples alane—maybe till they war like eneuch til himsel' no to rin, he pat oot mair nor his han' upo' them 'at cam to tak him: he strak them sair wi' the pooer itsel' 'at muvs a' airms. But no varra sair naither—he but knockit them doon!—jist to lat them ken they war to du as he bade them, an' lat his fowk be;—an' maybe to lat them ken 'at gien he loot them tak him, it was no 'at he couldna hin'er them gien he likit. I canna help thinkin' we may stan' up for ither fowk. An' I'm no sayin' 'at we arena to defen' oorsels frae a set attack wi' design.—But there's something o' mair importance yet nor kennin' the richt o' ony queston."

"What can that be? What can be o' mair importance nor doin' richt i' the sicht o' God?" said Donal.

"*Bein'* richt wi' the varra thoucht o' God, sae 'at we canna mistak, but maun ken jist what he wad hae dune. That's the big Richt, the mother o' a' the lave o' the richts. That's to be as the maister was. Onygait, whatever we du, it maun be sic as to be dune, *an' it maun be dune* i' the name o' God; whan we du naething we maun du that naething i' the name o' God. A body may weel say, 'O Lord, thoo hasna latten me see what I oucht to du, sae I'll du naething!' Gien a man ought to defen' himsel', but disna du 't, 'cause he thinks God wadna hae him du 't, wull God lea' him oondefent for that? Or gien a body stan's up i' the name o' God, an' fronts an airmy o' enemies, div ye think God 'ill forsake him 'cause he 's made a mistak? Whatever's dune wantin' faith maun be sin—it canna help it; whatever's dune in faith canna be sin, though it may be a mistak. Only latna a man tak presumption for faith! that's a fearsome mistak, for it's jist the opposite."

"I thank ye," said Donal. "I'll consider wi' my best endeevour what ye hae said."

"But o' a' things," resumed the cobbler, "luik 'at ye lo'e fair-play. Fairplay 's a won'erfu' word—a gran' thing constantly lost sicht o'. Man, I hae been tryin' to win at the duin' o' the richt this mony a year, but I daurna yet lat mysel' ac' upo' the spur o' the moment whaur my ain enterest 's concernt: my ain side micht yet blin' me to the ither man's side o' the business. Onybody can un'erstan' his ain richt, but it taks trible an' thoucht to un'erstan' what anither coonts his richt. Twa richts canna weel clash. It's a wrang an' a richt, or pairt wrang an' a pairt richt 'at clashes."

"Gien a'body did that, I doobt there wad be feow fortins made!" said Donal.

"Aboot that I canna say, no kennin'; I daurna discover a law whaur I haena knowledge! But this same fairplay lies, alang wi' love, at the varra rute and f'undation o' the universe. The theologians had a glimmer o' the fac' whan they made sae muckle o' justice, only their justice is sic a meeserable sma' bit plaister eemage o' justice, 'at it maist gars an honest body lauch. They seem to me like shepherds 'at rive doon the door-posts, an' syne block up the door wi' them."

Donal told him of the quarrel he had had with lord Forgue, and asked him whether he thought he had done right.

"Weel," answered the cobbler, "I'm as far frae blamin' you as I am frae justifeein' the yoong lord."

"He seems to me a fine kin' o' a lad," said Donal, "though some owerbeirin'."

"The likes o' him are mair to be excused for that nor ither fowk, for they hae great disadvantages i' the position an' the upbringin'. It's no easy for him 'at's broucht up a lord to believe he's jist ane wi' the lave."

Donal went for a stroll through the town, and met the minister, but he took no notice of him. He was greatly annoyed at the march which he said the fellow had stolen upon him, and regarded him as one who had taken an unfair advantage of him. But he had little influence at the castle. The earl never by any chance went to church. His niece, lady Arctura, did, however, and held the minister for an authority at things spiritual—one of whom living water was to be had without money and without price. But what she counted spiritual things were very common earthly stuff, and for the water, it was but stagnant water from the ditches of a sham theology. Only what was a poor girl to do who did not know how to feed herself, but apply to one who pretended to be able to feed others? How was she to know that he could not even feed himself? Out of many a difficulty she thought he helped her—only the difficulty would presently clasp her again, and she must deal with it as she best could, until a new one made her forget it, and go to the minister, or rather to his daughter, again. She was one of those who feel the need of some help to live—some upholding that is not of themselves, but who, through the stupidity of teachers unconsciously false,—men so unfit that they do not know they are unfit, direct their efforts, first towards having correct notions, then to work up the feelings that belong to those notions. She was an honest girl so far as she had been taught—perhaps not so far as she might have been without having been

taught. How was she to think aright with scarce a glimmer of God's truth? How was she to please God, as she called it, who thought of him in a way repulsive to every loving soul? How was she to be accepted of God, who did not accept her own neighbour, but looked down, without knowing it, upon so many of her fellow-creatures? How should such a one either enjoy or recommend her religion? It would have been the worse for her if she had enjoyed it—the worse for others if she had recommended it! Religion is simply the way home to the Father. There was little of the path in her religion except the difficulty of it. The true way is difficult enough because of our unchildlikeness—uphill, steep, and difficult, but there is fresh life on every surmounted height, a purer air gained, ever more life for more climbing. But the path that is not the true one is not therefore easy. Up hill is hard walking, but through a bog is worse. Those who seek God with their faces not even turned towards him, who, instead of beholding the Father in the Son, take the stupidest opinions concerning him and his ways from other men—what should they do but go wandering on dark mountains, spending their strength in avoiding precipices and getting out of bogs, mourning and sighing over their sins instead of leaving them behind and fleeing to the Father, whom to know is eternal life. Did they but set themselves to find out what Christ knew and meant and commanded, *and then to do it*, they would soon forget their false teachers. But alas! they go on bowing before long-faced, big-worded authority —the more fatally when it is embodied in a good man who, himself a victim to faith in men, sees the Son of God only through the theories of others, and not with the sight of his own spiritual eyes.

Donal had not yet seen the lady. He neither ate, sat, nor held intercourse with the family. Away from Davie, he spent his time in his tower chamber, or out of doors. All the grounds were open to him except a walled garden on the south-eastern slope, looking towards the sea, which the earl kept for himself, though he rarely walked in it. On the side of the hill away from the town, was a large park reaching down to the river, and stretching a long way up its bank—with fine trees, and glorious outlooks to the sea in one direction, and to the mountains in the other. Here Donal would often wander, now with a book, now with Davie. The boy's presence was rarely an interruption to his thoughts when he wanted to think. Sometimes he would thrown himself on the grass and read aloud; then Davie would throw himself beside him, and let the words he could not understand flow over him in a spiritual cataract. On the river was a boat, and though

at first he was awkward enough in the use of the oars, he was soon able to enjoy thoroughly a row up or down the stream, especially in the twilight.

He was alone with his book under a beech-tree on a steep slope to the river, the day after his affair with lord Forgue: reading aloud, he did not hear the approach of his lordship.

"Mr. Grant," he said, "if you will say you are sorry you threw me from my horse, I will say I am sorry I struck you."

"I am very sorry," said Donal, rising, "that it was necessary to throw you from your horse; and perhaps your lordship may remember that you struck me before I did so."

"That has nothing to do with it. I propose an accommodation, or compromise, or what you choose to call it: if you will do the one, I will do the other."

"What I think I ought to do, my lord, I do without bargaining. I am not sorry I threw you from your horse, and to say so would be to lie."

"Of course everybody thinks himself in the right!" said his lordship with a small sneer.

"It does not follow that no one is ever in the right!" returned Donal. "Does your lordship think you were in the right—either towards me or the poor animal who could not obey you because he was in torture?"

"I don't say I do."

"Then everybody does not think himself in the right! I take your lordship's admission as an apology."

"By no means: when I make an apology, I will do it; I will not sneak out of it."

He was evidently at strife with himself: he knew he was wrong, but could not yet bring himself to say so. It is one of the poorest of human weaknesses that a man should be ashamed of *saying* he has done wrong, instead of so ashamed of having done wrong that he cannot rest till he has said so; for the shame cleaves fast until the confession removes it.

Forgue walked away a step or two, and stood with his back to Donal, poking the point of his stick into the grass. All at once he turned and said:

"I will apologize if you will tell me one thing."

"I will tell you whether you apologize or not," said Donal "I have never asked you to apologize."

"Tell me then why you did not return either of my blows yesterday."

"I should like to know why you ask—but I will answer you: simply because to do so would have been to disobey my master."

"That's a sort of thing I don't understand. But I only wanted to know it was not cowardice; I could not make an apology to a coward."

"If I were a coward, you would owe me an apology all the same, and he is a poor creature who will not pay his debts. But I hope it is not necessary I should either thrash or insult your lordship to convince you I fear you no more than that blackbird there!"

Forgue gave a little laugh. A moment's pause followed. Then he held out his hand, but in a half-hesitating, almost sheepish way:

"Well, well! shake hands," he said.

"No, my lord," returned Donal. "I bear your lordship not the slightest ill-will, but I will shake hands with no one in a half-hearted way, and no other way is possible while you are uncertain whether I am a coward or not."

So saying, he threw himself again upon the grass, and lord Forgue walked away, offended afresh.

The next morning he came into the school-room where Donal sat at lessons with Davie. He had a book in his hand.

"Mr. Grant," he said, "will you help me with this passage in Xenophon?"

"With all my heart," answered Donal, and in a few moments had him out of his difficulty.

But instead of going, his lordship sat down a little way off, and went on with his reading—sat until master and pupil went out, and left him sitting there. The next morning he came with a fresh request, and Donal found occasion to approve warmly of a translation he proposed. From that time he came almost every morning. He was no great scholar, but with the prospect of an English university before him, thought it better to read a little.

The housekeeper at the castle was a good woman, and very kind to Donal, feeling perhaps that he fell to her care the more that he was by birth of her own class; for it was said in the castle, "the tutor makes no pretence to being a gentleman." Whether he was the more or the less of one on that account, I leave my reader to judge according to his capability. Sometimes when his dinner was served, mistress Brookes would herself appear, to ensure proper attention to him, and would sit down and talk to him while he ate, ready to rise and serve him if necessary. Their early days had had something in common, though she came from the southern highlands of green hills and more sheep. She gave him some rather needful information about the family; and he

soon perceived that there would have been less peace in the house but for her good temper and good sense.

Lady Arctura was the daughter of the last lord Morven, and left sole heir to the property; Forgue and his brother Davie were the sons of the present earl. The present lord was the brother of the last, and had lived with him for some years before he succeeded. He was a man of peculiar and studious habits; nobody ever seemed to take to him; and since his wife's death, his health had been precarious. Though a strange man, he was a just if not generous master. His brother had left him guardian to lady Arctura, and he had lived in the castle as before. His wife was a very lovely, but delicate woman, and latterly all but confined to her room. Since her death a great change had passed upon her husband. Certainly his behaviour was sometimes hard to understand.

"He never gangs to the kirk—no ance in a twalmonth!" said Mrs. Brookes. "Fowk sud be dacent, an' wha ever h'ard o' dacent fowk 'at didna gang to the kirk ance o' the Sabbath! I dinna haud wi' gaein' twise mysel': ye hae na time to read yer ain chapters gien ye do that. But the man's a weel behavet man, sae far as ye see, naither sayin' nor doin' the thing he shouldna: what he may think, wha's to say! the mair ten'er conscience coonts itsel' the waur sinner; an' I'm no gaein' to think what I canna ken! There's some 'at says he led a gey lowse kin' o' a life afore he cam to bide wi' the auld yerl; he was wi' the airmy i' furreign pairts, they say; but aboot that I ken naething. The auld yerl was something o' a sanct himsel', rist the banes o' 'im! We're no the jeedges o' the leevin' ony mair nor o' the deid! But I maun awa' to luik efter things; a minute's an hoor lost wi' thae fule lasses. Ye're a freen' o' An'rew Comin's, they tell me, sir: I dinna ken what to do wi' 's lass, she's that upsettin'! Ye wad think she was ane o' the faimily whiles; an' ither whiles she 's that silly!"

"I'm sorry to hear it!" said Donal. "Her grandfather and grandmother are the best of good people."

"I daursay! But there's jist what I hae seen: them 'at 's broucht up their ain weel eneuch, their son's bairn they'll jist lat gang. Aither they're tired o' the thing, or they think they're safe. They hae lippent til yoong Eppy a heap ower muckle. But I'm naither a prophet nor the son o' a prophet, as the minister said last Sunday—an' said well, honest man! for it's the plain trowth: he's no ane o' the major nor yet the minor anes! But haud him oot o' the pu'pit an' he dis no that ill. His dochter 's no an ill lass aither, an' a great freen' o' my leddy's. But I'm clean

ashamed o' mysel' to gang on this gait. Hae ye dune wi' yer denner, Mr. Grant?—Weel, I'll jist sen' to clear awa', an' lat ye til yer lessons."

CHAPTER XVII.

LADY ARCTURA.

It was now almost three weeks since Donal had become an inmate of the castle, and he had scarcely set his eyes on the lady of the house. Once he had seen her back, and more than once had caught a glimpse of her profile, but he had never really seen her face, and they had never spoken to each other.

One afternoon he was sauntering along under the overhanging boughs of an avenue of beeches, formerly the approach to a house in which the family had once lived, but which had now another entrance. He had in his hand a copy of the Apocrypha, which he had never seen till he found this in the library. In his usual fashion he had begun to read it through, and was now in the book called the Wisdom of Solomon, at the 17th chapter, narrating the discomfiture of certain magicians. Taken with the beauty of the passage, he sat down on an old stone-roller, and read aloud. Parts of the passage were these—they will enrich my page :—

"For they, that promised to drive away terrors and troubles from a sick soul, were sick themselves of fear, worthy to be laughed at.

". . . For wickedness, condemned by her own witness, is very timorous, and being pressed with conscience, always forecasteth grievous things.

". . . But they sleeping the same sleep that night, which was indeed intolerable, and which came upon them out of the bottoms of inevitable hell,

"Were partly vexed with monstrous apparitions, and partly fainted, their heart failing them: for a sudden fear, and not looked for, came upon them.

"So then whosoever there fell down was straitly kept, shut up in a prison without iron bars.

"For whether he were husbandman, or shepherd, or a labourer in the field, he was overtaken, and endured that necessity, which could not be avoided: for they were all bound with one chain of darkness.

"Whether it were a whistling wind, or a melodious noise of birds among the spreading branches, or a pleasing fall of water running violently,

"Or a terrible sound of stones cast down, or a running that could not be seen of skipping beasts, or a roaring voice of most savage wild beasts, or a rebounding echo from the hollow mountains; these things made them to swoon for fear.

"For the whole world shined with clear light, and none were hindered in their labour:

"Over them only was spread an heavy night, an image of that darkness which should afterward receive them: but yet were they unto themselves more grievous than the darkness."

He had read so much, and stopped to think a little; for through the incongruity of it, which he did not doubt arose from poverty of imagination in the translator, rendering him unable to see what the poet meant, ran yet an indubitable vein of awful truth, whether fully intended by the writer or not mattered little to such a reader as Donal—when, lifting his eyes, he saw lady Arctura standing before him with a strange listening look. A spell seemed upon her; her face was white, her lips white and a little parted.

Attracted, as she was about to pass him, by the sound of what was none the less like the Bible from the solemn crooning way in which Donal read it to the congregation of his listening thoughts, yet was certainly not the Bible, she was presently fascinated by the vague terror of what she heard, and stood absorbed: without much originative power, she had an imagination prompt and delicate and strong in response.

Donal had but a glance of her; his eyes returned again at once to his book, and he sat silent and motionless, though not seeing a word. For one instant she stood still; then he heard the soft sound of her dress as, with noiseless foot, she stole back, and took another way.

I must give my reader a shadow of her. She was rather tall, slender, and fair. But her hair was dark, and so crinkly that, when merely parted, it did all the rest itself. Her forehead was rather low. Her eyes were softly dark, and her features very regular—her nose perhaps hardly large enough, or her chin. Her mouth was rather thin-lipped, but would have been sweet except for a seemingly habitual expression of pain. A pair of dark brows overhung her sweet eyes, and gave a look of doubtful temper, yet restored something of the strength lacking a little in nose and chin. It was an interesting—not a quite harmonious face, and in happiness might, Donal thought, be beautiful even.

Her figure was eminently graceful—as Donal saw when he raised his eyes at the sound of her retreat. He thought she needed not have run away as from something dangerous: why did she not pass him like any other servant of the house? But what seemed to him like contempt did not hurt him. He was too full of realities to be much affected by opinion however shown. Besides, he had had his sorrow and had learned his lesson. He was a poet—but one of the few without any weak longing after listening ears. The poet whose poetry *needs* an audience, can be but little of a poet; neither can the poetry that is of no good to the man himself, be of much good to anybody else. There are the song-poets and the life-poets, or rather the God-poems. Sympathy is lovely and dear—chiefly when it comes unsought; but the fame after which so many would-be, yea, so many real poets sigh, is poorest froth. Donal could sing his songs like the birds, content with the blue heaven or the sheep for an audience—or any passing angel that cared to listen. On the hill-sides he would sing them aloud, but it was of the merest natural necessity. A look of estrangement on the face of a friend, a look of suffering on that of any animal, would at once and sorely affect him, but not a disparaging expression on the face of a comparative stranger, were she the loveliest woman he had ever seen. He was little troubled about the world, because little troubled about himself.

Lady Arctura and lord Forgue lived together like brother and sister, apparently without much in common, and still less of misunderstanding. There would have been more chance of their taking a fancy to each other if they had not been brought up together; they were now little together, and never alone together.

Very few visitors came to the castle, and then only to call. Lord Morven seldom saw any one, his excuse being his health.

But lady Arctura was on terms of intimacy with Sophia Carmichael, the minister's daughter—to whom her father had communicated his dissatisfaction with the character of Donal, and poured out his indignation at his conduct. He ought to have left the parish at once! whereas he had instead secured for himself the best, the only situation in it, without giving him a chance of warning his lordship! The more injustice her father spoke against him, the more Miss Carmichael condemned him; for she was a good daughter, and looked up to her father as the wisest and best man in the parish. Very naturally therefore she repeated his words to lady Arctura. She in her turn conveyed them to her uncle. He would not, however, pay much attention to them. The thing was done, he said. He had himself seen and talked with Donal, and liked him! The young man had himself told

him of the clergyman's disapprobation! He would request him to avoid all reference to religious subjects! Therewith he dismissed the matter, and forgot all about it. Anything requiring an effort of the will, an arrangement of ideas, or thought as to mode, his lordship would not encounter. Nor was anything to him of such moment that he must do it at once. Lady Arctura did not again refer to the matter: her uncle was not one to take liberties with—least of all to press to action. But she continued painfully doubtful whether she was not neglecting her duty, trying to persuade herself that she was waiting only till she should have something definite to say of her own knowledge against him.

And now what was she to conclude from his reading the Apocrypha? The fact was not to be interpreted to his advantage: was he not reading what was not the Bible as if it were the Bible, and when he might have been reading the Bible itself? Besides, the Apocrypha came so near the Bible when it was not the Bible! it must be at least rather wicked! At the same time she could not drive from her mind the impressiveness both of the matter she had heard, and his manner of reading it: the strong sound of judgment and condemnation in it came home to her—she could not have told how or why, except generally because of her sins. She was one of those—not very few I think—who from conjunction of a lovely conscience with an ill-instructed mind, are doomed for a season to much suffering. She was largely different from her friend: the religious opinions of the latter—they were in reality rather metaphysical than religious, and bad either way—though she clung to them with all the tenacity of a creature with claws, occasioned her not an atom of mental discomposure: perhaps that was in part why she clung to them! they were as she would have them! She did not trouble herself about what God required of her, beyond holding the doctrine the holding of which guaranteed, as she thought, her future welfare. Conscience toward God had very little to do with her opinions, and her heart still less. Her head on the contrary, perhaps rather her memory, was considerably occupied with the matter; nothing she held had ever been by her regarded on its own merits—that is, on its individual claim to truth; if it had been handed down by her church, that was enough; to support it she would search out text after text, and press it into the service. Any meaning but that which the church of *her* fathers gave to a passage must be of the devil, and every man opposed to the truth who saw in that meaning anything but truth! It was indeed impossible Miss Carmichael should see any meaning but that, even if she had looked for it; she was nowise qualified for discovering truth, not

being herself true. What she saw and loved in the doctrines of her church was not the truth, but the assertion; and whoever questioned, not to say the doctrine, but even the proving of it by any particular passage, was a dangerous person, and unsound. All the time her acceptance and defence of any doctrine made not the slightest difference to her life—as indeed how should it?

Such was the only *friend* lady Arctura had. But the conscience and heart of the younger woman were alive to a degree that boded ill either for the doctrine that stinted their growth, or the nature unable to cast it off. Miss Carmichael was a woman about six-and-twenty—and had been a woman, like too many Scotch girls, long before she was out of her teens—a human flower cut and dried—an unpleasant specimen, and by no means valuable from its scarcity. Self-sufficient, assured, with scarce shyness enough for modesty, handsome and hard, she was essentially a self-glorious Philistine; nor would she be anything better till something was sent to humble her, though what spiritual engine might be equal to the task was not for man to imagine. She was clever, but her cleverness made nobody happier; she had great confidence, but her confidence gave courage to no one, and took it from many; she had little fancy, and less imagination than any other I ever knew. The divine wonder was, that she had not yet driven the delicate, truth-loving Arctura mad. From her childhood she had had the ordering of all her opinions: whatever Sophy Carmichael said, lady Arctura never thought of questioning. A lie is indeed a thing in its nature unbelievable, but there is a false belief always ready to receive the false truth, and there is no end to the mischief the two can work. The awful punishment of untruth in the inward parts is that the man is given over to believe a lie.

Lady Arctura was in herself a gentle creature who shrank from either giving or receiving a rough touch; but she had an inherited pride, by herself unrecognized as such, which made her capable of hurting as well as being hurt. Next to the doctrines of the Scottish church, she respected her own family: it had in truth no other claim to respect than that its little good and much evil had been done before the eyes of a large part of many generations—whence she was born to think herself distinguished, and to imagine a claim for the acknowledgment of distinction upon all except those of greatly higher rank than her own. This inborn arrogance was in some degree modified by respect for the writers of certain books—not one of whom was of any regard in the eyes of the thinkers of the age. Of any writers of power, beyond those of the Bible, either in this country or another, she knew nothing. Yet she had a real instinct for what was good in literature; and of the writers

to whom I have referred she not only liked the worthiest best, but liked best their best things. I need hardly say they were all religious writers; for the keen conscience and obedient heart of the girl had made her very early turn herself towards the quarter where the sun ought to rise, the quarter where all night long gleams the auroral hope; but unhappily she had not gone direct to the heavenly well in earthly ground—the words of the Master himself. How could she? From very childhood her mind had been filled with traditionary utterances concerning the divine character and the divine plans—the merest inventions of men far more desirous of understanding what they were not required to understand, than of doing what they were required to do—whence their crude and false utterances concerning a God of their own fancy—in whom it was a good man's duty, in the name of any possible God, to disbelieve; and just because she was true, authority had immense power over her. The very sweetness of their nature forbids such to doubt the fitness of others.

She had besides had a governess of the orthodox type, a large proportion of whose teaching was of the worst heresy, for it was lies against him who is light, and in whom is no darkness at all; her doctrines were so many smoked glasses held up between the mind of her pupil and the glory of the living God; nor had she once directed her gaze to the very likeness of God, the face of Jesus Christ. Had Arctura set herself to understand him the knowledge of whom *is* eternal life, she would have believed none of these false reports of him, but she had not yet met with any one to help her to cast aside the doctrines of men, and go face to face with the Son of Man, the visible God. First lie of all, she had been taught that she must believe so and so before God would let her come near him or listen to her. The old cobbler could have taught her differently; but she would have thought it improper to hold conversation with such a man, even if she had known him for the best man in Auchars. She was in sore and sad earnest to believe as she was told she must believe; therefore instead of beginning to do what Jesus Christ said, she tried hard to imagine herself one of the chosen, tried hard to believe herself the chief of sinners. There was no one to tell her that it is only the man who sees something of the glory of God, the height and depth and breadth and length of his love and unselfishness, not a child dabbling in stupid doctrines, that can feel like St. Paul. She tried to feel that she deserved to be burned in hell for ever and ever, and that it was boundlessly good of God—who made her so that she could not help being a sinner—to give her the least chance of escaping it. She tried to feel that, though she

could not be saved without something which the God of perfect love could give her if he pleased, but might not please to give her, yet if she was not saved it would be all her own fault: and so ever the round of a great miserable treadmill of contradictions! For a moment she would be able to say this or that she thought she ought to say; the next the feeling would be gone, and she as miserable as before. Her friend made no attempt to imbue her with her own calm indifference, nor could she have succeeded had she attempted it. But though she had never been troubled herself, and that because she had never been in earnest, she did not find it the less easy to take upon her the rôle of a spiritual adviser, and gave no end of counsel for the attainment of *assurance*. She told her truly enough that all her trouble came of want of faith; but she showed her no one fit to believe in.

CHAPTER XVIII.

A CLASH.

All this time, Donal had never again seen the earl, neither had the latter shown any interest in Davie's progress. But lady Arctura was full of serious anxiety concerning him. Heavily prejudiced against the tutor, she dreaded his influence on the mind of her little cousin.

There was a small recess in the schoolroom—it had been a bay window, but from an architectural necessity arising from decay, it had, all except a narrow eastern light, been built up—and in this recess Donal was one day sitting with a book, while Davie was busy writing at the table in the middle of the room: it was past school-hours, but the weather did not invite them out of doors, and Donal had given Davie a poem to copy. Lady Arctura came into the room—she had never entered it before since Donal came—and thinking he was alone, began to talk to the boy. She spoke in so gentle a tone that Donal, busy with his book, did not for some time distinguish a word she said. He never suspected she was unaware of his presence. By degrees her voice grew a little louder, and by and by these words reached him:

"You know, Davie dear, every sin, whatever it is, deserves God's wrath and curse, both in this life and that which is to come; and if it had not been that Jesus Christ gave himself to turn away his anger and satisfy his justice by bearing the punish-

ment for us, God would send us all to the place of misery for ever and ever. It is for his sake, not for ours, that he pardons us."

She had not yet ceased when Donal rose in the wrath of love, and came out into the room.

"Lady Arctura," he said, "I dare not sit still and hear such false things uttered against the blessed God!"

Lady Arctura started in dire dismay, but in virtue of her breed and her pride recovered herself immediately, drew herself up, and said—

"Mr. Grant, you forget yourself!"

"I'm very willing to do that, my lady," answered Donal, "but I must not forget the honour of my God If you were a heathen woman I might think whether the hour was come for enlightening you further, but to hear one who has had the Bible in her hands from her childhood say such things about the God who made her and sent his Son to save her, without answering a word for him, would be cowardly!"

"What do you know about such things? What gives you a right to speak?" said lady Arctura.

Her pride-strength was already beginning to desert her.

"I had a Christian mother," answered Donal, "—have her yet, thank God!—who taught me to love nothing but the truth; I have studied the Bible from my childhood, often whole days together, when I was out with the cattle or the sheep; and I have tried to do what the Lords tells me, from nearly the earliest time I can remember. Therefore I am able to set to my seal that God is true—that he is light, and there is no darkness of unfairness or selfishness in him. I love God with my whole heart and soul, my lady."

Arctura tried to say she too loved him so, but her conscience interfered, and she could not.

"I don't say *you* don't love him," Donal went on; "but how you can love him and believe such things of him, I don't understand. Whoever taught them first was a terrible liar against God, who is lovelier than all the imaginations of all his creatures can think."

Lady Arctura swept from the room—though she was trembling from head to foot. At the door she turned and called Davie. The boy looked up in his tutor's face, mutely asking if he should obey her.

"Go," said Donal.

In less than a minute he came back, his eyes full of tears.

"Arkie says she is going to tell papa. Is it true, Mr. Grant,

that you are a dangerous man? I do not believe it—though you do carry such a big knife."

Donal laughed.

"It is my grandfather's skean dhu," he said: "I mend my pens with it, you know! But it is strange, Davie, that, when a body knows something other people don't, they should be angry with him! They will even think he wants to make them bad when he wants to help them to be good!"

"But Arkie *is* good, Mr. Grant!"

"I am sure she is. But she does not know so much about God as I do, or she would never say such things of him: we must talk about him more after this!"

"No, no, please, Mr. Grant! We won't say a word about him, for Arkie says except you promise never to speak of God, she will tell papa, and he will send you away."

"Davie," said Donal with solemnity, "I would not give such a promise for the castle and all it contains—no, not to save your life and the life of everybody in it! For Jesus says, 'Whosoever denieth me before men, him will I deny before my father in heaven;' and rather than that, I would jump from the top of the castle. Why, Davie! would a man deny his own father or mother?"

"I don't know," answered Davie; "I don't remember my mother."

"I'll tell you what," said Donal, with sudden inspiration: "I will promise not to speak about God at any other time, if she will promise to sit by when I do speak of him—say once a week. —Perhaps we shall do what he tells us all the better that we don't talk so much about him!"

"Oh, thank you, Mr. Grant!—I will tell her," cried Davie, jumping up relieved. "Oh, thank you, Mr. Grant!" he repeated; "I could not bear you to go away. I should never stop crying if you did. And you won't say any wicked things, will you? for Arkie reads her Bible every day."

"So do I, Davie."

"Do you?" returned Davie, "I'll tell her that too, and then she will see she must have been mistaken."

He hurried to his cousin with Donal's suggestion.

It threw her into no small perplexity—first from doubt as to the propriety of the thing proposed, next because of the awkwardness of it, then from a sudden fear lest his specious tongue should lead herself into the bypaths of doubt, and to the castle of Giant Despair—at which, indeed, it was a gracious wonder she had not arrived ere now What if she should be persuaded of

things which it was impossible to believe and be saved! She did not see that such belief as she desired to have was in itself essential damnation. For what can there be in heaven or earth for a soul that believes in an unjust God? To rejoice in such a belief would be to be a devil, and to believe what cannot be rejoiced in, is misery. No doubt a man may not see the true nature of the things he thinks she believes, but that cannot save him from the loss of not knowing God, whom to know is alone eternal life; for who can know him that believes evil things of him? That many a good man does believe such things, only argues his heart not yet one towards him. To make his belief possible he must dwell on the good things he has learned about God, and not think about the bad things.

And what would Sophia say? Lady Arctura would have sped to her friend for counsel before giving any answer to the audacious proposal, but she was just then from home for a fortnight, and she must resolve without her! She reflected also that she had not yet anything sufficiently definite to say to her uncle about the young man's false doctrine; and, for herself, concluded that, as she was well grounded for argument, knowing thoroughly the Shorter Catechism with the proofs from scripture of every doctrine it contained, it was foolish to fear anything from one who went in the strength of his own ignorant and presumptuous will, regardless of the opinions of the fathers of the church, and accepting only such things as were pleasing to his unregenerate nature.

But she hesitated; and after waiting for a week without receiving any answer to his proposal, Donal said to Davie,

"We shall have a lesson in the New Testament to-morrow: you had better mention it to your cousin."

The next morning he asked him if he had mentioned it. The boy said he had.

"What did she say, Davie?"

"Nothing—only looked strange," answered Davie.

When the hour of noon was past, and lady Arctura did not appear, Donal said,

"Davie, we'll have our New Testament lesson out of doors: that is the best place for it!"

"It is the best place!" responded Davie, jumping up. "But you're not taking your book, Mr. Grant!"

"Never mind; I will give you a lesson or two without book first."

Just as they were leaving the room, appeared lady Arctura with Miss Carmichael.

"I understood," said the former, with not a little haughtiness, "that you——"

She hesitated, and Miss Carmichael took up the word.

"We wish to form our own judgment," she said, "on the nature of the religious instruction you give your pupil."

"I invited lady Arctura to be present when I taught him about God," said Donal.

"Then are you not now going to do so?" said Arctura.

"As your ladyship made no answer to my proposal, and school hours were over, I concluded you were not coming."

"And you would not give the lesson without her ladyship!" said Miss Carmichael. "Very right!"

"Excuse me," returned Donal; "we were going to have it out of doors."

"But you had agreed not to give him any so-called religious instruction but in the presence of lady Arctura!"

"By no means. I only offered to give it in her presence if she chose. There was no question of the lessons being given."

Miss Carmichael looked at lady Arctura as much as to say—"Is he speaking the truth?" and if she replied, it was in the same fashion.

Donal looked at Miss Carmichael. He did not at all relish her interference. He had never said he would give his lesson before any who chose to be present! But he did not see how to meet the intrusion. Neither could he turn back into the schoolroom, sit down, and begin. He put his hand on Davie's shoulder, and walked slowly towards the lawn. The ladies followed in silence. He sought to forget their presence, and be conscious only of his pupil's and his master's. On the lawn he stopped suddenly.

"Davie," he said, "where do you fancy the first lesson in the New Testament ought to begin?"

"At the beginning," replied Davie.

"When a thing is perfect, Davie, it is difficult to say what is the beginning of it: show me one of your marbles."

The boy produced from his pocket a pure white one—a real marble.

"That is a good one for the purpose," remarked Donal, "—very smooth and white, with just one red streak in it! Now where is the beginning of this marble?"

"Nowhere," answered Davie.

"If I should say everywhere?" suggested Donal.

"Ah, yes!" said the boy.

"But I agree with you that it begins nowhere."

"It can't do both!"

"Oh, yes, it can! it begins nowhere for itself, but everywhere

for us. Only all its beginnings are endings, and all its endings are beginnings. Look here: suppose we begin at this red streak, it is just there we should end again. That is because it is a perfect thing.—Well, there was one who said, 'I am Alpha and Omega,'—the first Greek letter and the last, you know—'the beginning and the end, the first and the last.' All the New Testament is about him. He is perfect, and I may begin about him where I best can. Listen then as if you had never heard anything about him before.—Many years ago—about fifty or sixty grandfathers off—there appeared in the world a few men who said that a certain man had been their companion for some time and had just left them; that he was killed by cruel men, and buried by his friends; but that, as he had told them he would, he lay in the grave only three days, and left it on the third alive and well; and that, after forty days, during which they saw him several times, he went up into the sky, and disappeared.—It wasn't a very likely story, was it?"

"No," replied Davie.

The ladies exchanged looks of horror. Neither spoke, but each leaned eagerly forward, in fascinated expectation of worse to follow.

"But, Davie," Donal went on, "however unlikely it must have seemed to those who heard it, I believe every word of it."

A ripple of contempt passed over Miss Carmichael's face.

"For," continued Donal, "the man said he was the son of God, come down from his father to see his brothers, his father's children, and take home with him to his father those who would go."

"Excuse me," interrupted Miss Carmichael, with a pungent smile: "what he said was, that if any man believed in him, he should be saved."

"Run along, Davie," said Donal. "I will tell you more of what he said next lesson. Don't forget what I've told you now."

"No, sir," answered Davie, and ran off.

Donal lifted his hat, and would have gone towards the river. But Miss Carmichael, stepping forward, said,

"Mr. Grant, I cannot let you go till you answer me one question: do you believe in the atonement?"

"I do," answered Donal.

"Favour me then with your views upon it," she said.

"Are you troubled in your mind on the subject?" asked Donal.

"Not in the least," she replied, with a slight curl of her lip.

"Then I see no occasion for giving you my views."

"But I insist."

Donald smiled.

"Of what consequence can my opinions be to you, ma'am? Why should you compel a confession of my faith?"

"As the friend of this family, and the daughter of the clergyman of this parish, I have a right to ask what your opinions are · you have a most important charge committed to you—a child for whose soul you have to account!"

"For that I am accountable, but, pardon me, not to you."

"You are accountable to lord Morven for what you teach his child."

"I am not."

"What! He will turn you away at a moment's notice if you say so to him."

"I should be quite ready to go. If I were accountable to him for what I taught, I should of course teach only what he pleased. But do you suppose I would take any situation on such a condition?"

"It is nothing to me, or his lordship either, I presume, what you would or would not do."

"Then I see no reason why you should detain me.—Lady Arctura, I did not offer to give my lesson in the presence of any other than yourself: I will not do so again. You will be welcome, for you have a right to know what I am teaching him. If you bring another, except it be my lord Morven, I will take David to my own room."

With these words he left them.

Lady Arctura was sorely bewildered. She could not but feel that her friend had not shown to the better advantage, and that the behaviour of Donal had been dignified. But surely he was very wrong! what he said to Davie sounded so very different from what was said at church, and by her helper, Miss Carmichael! It was a pity they had heard so little! He would have gone on if only Sophy had had patience and held her peace! Perhaps he might have spoken better things if she had not interfered! It would hardly be fair to condemn him upon so little! He had said that he believed every word of the New Testament—or something very like it!

"I have heard enough!" said Miss Carmichael: "I will speak to my father at once."

The next day Donal received a note to the following effect:—

"Sir, in consequence of what I felt bound to report to my father of the conversation we had yesterday, he desires that you will call upon him at your earliest convenience. He is gene-

rally at home from three to five. Yours truly, Sophia Agnes Carmichael."

To this Donal immediately replied :—

"Madam, notwithstanding the introduction I brought him from another clergyman, your father declined my acquaintance, passing me afterwards as one unknown to him. From this fact, and from the nature of the report which your behaviour to me yesterday justifies me in supposing you must have carried to him, I can hardly mistake his object in wishing to see me. I will attend the call of no man to defend my opinions ; your father's I have heard almost every Sunday since I came to the castle, and have been from childhood familiar with them. Yours truly, Donal Grant."

Not a word more came to him from either of them. When they happened to meet, Miss Carmichael took no more notice of him than her father.

But she impressed it upon the mind of her friend that, if unable to procure his dismission, she ought at least to do what she could to protect her cousin from the awful consequences of such false teaching : if she was present, he would not say such things as he would in her absence, for it was plain he was under restraint with her! She might even have some influence with him if she would but take courage to show him where he was wrong! Or she might find things such that her uncle must see the necessity of turning him away ; as the place belonged to her, he would never go dead against her! She did not see that that was just the thing to fetter the action of a delicate-minded girl.

Continually haunted, however, with the feeling that she ought to do something, lady Arctura felt as if she dared not absent herself from the lesson, however disagreeable it might prove : that much she *could* do! Upon the next occasion, therefore, she appeared in the schoolroom at the hour appointed, and with a cold bow took the chair Donal placed for her.

"Now, Davie," said Donal, "what have you done since our last lesson?"

Davie stared.

"You didn't tell me to do anything, Mr. Grant!"

"No ; but what then did I give you the lesson for? Where is the good of such a lesson if it makes no difference to you! What was it I told you?"

Davie, who had never thought about it since, the lesson having been broken off before Donal could bring it to its natural fruit, considered, and said,

"That Jesus Christ rose from the dead."

"Well—where is the good of knowing that?"

Davie was silent; he knew no good of knowing it, neither could imagine any. The Catechism, of which he had learned about half, suggested nothing.

"Come, Davie, I will help you: is Jesus dead, or is he alive?"

Davie considered.

"Alive," he answered.

"What does he do?"

Davie did not know.

"What did he die for?"

Here Davie had an answer—a cut and dried one:

"To take away our sins," he said.

"Then what does he live for?"

Davie was once more silent.

"Do you think if a man died for a thing, he would be likely to forget it the minute he rose again?"

"No, sir."

"Do you not think he would just go on doing the same thing as before?"

"I do, sir."

"Then, as he died to take away our sins, he lives to take them away!"

"Yes, sir."

"What are sins, Davie?"

"Bad things, sir."

"Yes; the bad things we think, and the bad things we feel, and the bad things we do. Have you any sins, Davie?"

"Yes; I am very wicked."

"Oh! are you? How do you know it?"

"Arkie told me."

"What is being wicked?"

"Doing bad things."

"What bad things do you do?"

"I don't know, sir."

"Then you don't know that you are wicked; you only know that Arkie told you so!"

Lady Arctura drew herself up; but Donal was too intent to perceive the offence he had given.

"I will tell you," Donal went on, "something you did wicked to-day." Davie grew rosy red. "When we find out one wicked thing we do, it is a beginning to finding out all the wicked things we do. Some people would rather not find them out, but have them hidden from themselves and from God too. But let us find

them out, everyone of them, that we may ask Jesus to take them away, and help Jesus to take them away, by fighting them with all our strength.—This morning you pulled the little pup's ears till he screamed." Davie hung his head. "You stopped a while, and then did it again! So I knew it wasn't that you didn't know. Is that a thing Jesus would have done when he was a little boy?"

"No, sir."

"Why?"

"Because it would have been wrong."

"I suspect, rather, it is because he would have loved the little pup. He didn't have to think about its being wrong. He loves every kind of living thing. He wants to take away your sin because he loves you. He doesn't merely want to make you not cruel to the little pup, but to take away the wrong *think* that doesn't love him. He wants to make you love every living creature. Davie, Jesus came out of the grave to make us good."

Tears were flowing down Davie's cheeks.

"The lesson 's done, Davie," said Donal, and rose and went, leaving him with lady Arctura.

But ere he reached the door, he turned with sudden impulse, and said :—

"Davie, I love Jesus Christ and his Father more than I can tell you—more than I can put in words—more than I can think; and if you love me you will mind what Jesus tells you."

"What a good man you must be, Mr. Grant!—Mustn't he, Arkie?" sobbed Davie.

Donal laughed.

"What, Davie!" he exclaimed. "You think me very good for loving the only good person in the whole world! That is very odd! Why, Davie, I should be the most contemptible creature, knowing him as I do, not to love him with all my heart —yes, with all the big heart I shall have one day when he has done making me."

"Is he making you still, Mr. Grant? I thought you were grown up!"

"Well, I don't think he will make me any taller," answered Donal. "But the live part of me—the thing I love you with, the thing I think about God with, the thing I love poetry with, the thing I read the Bible with—that thing God keeps on making bigger and bigger. I do not know where it will stop, I only know where it will not stop. That thing is *me*, and God will keep on making it bigger to all eternity, though he has not even got it into the right shape yet."

"Why is he so long about it?"

"I don't think he is long about it; but he could do it quicker if I were as good as by this time I ought to be, with the father and mother I have, and all my long hours on the hillsides with my New Testament and the sheep. I prayed to God on the hill and in the fields, and he heard me, Davie, and made me see the foolishness of many things, and the grandeur and beauty of other things. Davie, God wants to give you the whole world, and everything in it. When you have begun to do the things Jesus tells you, then you will be my brother, and we shall both be his little brothers, and the sons of his Father God, and so the heirs of all things."

With that he turned again and went.

The tears were rolling down Arctura's face without her being aware of it.

"He is a well-meaning man," she said to herself, "but dreadfully mistaken: the Bible says *believe*, not *do!*"

The poor girl, though she read her bible regularly, was so blinded by the dust and ashes of her teaching, that she knew very little of what was actually in it. The most significant things slipped from her as if they were merest words without shadow of meaning or intent: they did not support the doctrines she had been taught, and therefore said nothing to her. The story of Christ and the appeals of those who had handled the Word of Life had another end in view than making people understand how God arranged matters to save them. God would have us live: if we live we cannot but know; all the knowledge in the universe could not make us live. Obedience is the road to all things—the only way in which to grow able to trust him. Love and faith and obedience are sides of the same prism.

Regularly after that, lady Arctura came to the lesson—always intending to object as soon as it was over. But always before the end came, Donal had said something that went so to the heart of the honest girl that she could say nothing. As if she too had been a pupil, as indeed she was, far more than either knew, she would rise when Davie rose, and go away with him. But it was to go alone into the garden, or to her room, not seldom finding herself wishing things true which yet she counted terribly dangerous: listening to them might not she as well as Davie fail miserably of escape from the wrath to come?

CHAPTER XIX.

THE FACTOR.

THE old avenue of beeches, leading immediately nowhither any more, but closed at one end by a built-up gate, and at the other by a high wall, between which two points it stretched quite a mile, was a favourite resort of Donal's, partly for its beauty, partly for its solitude. The arms of the great trees crossing made of it a long aisle—its roof a broken vault of leaves, upheld by irregular pointed arches—which affected one's imagination like an ever shifting dream of architectural suggestion. Having ceased to be a way, it was now all but entirely deserted, and there was *eeriness* in the vanishing vista that showed nothing beyond. When the wind of the twilight sighed in gusts through its moanful crowd of fluttered leaves; or when the wind of the winter was tormenting the ancient haggard boughs, and the trees looked as if they were weary of the world, and longing after the garden of God; yet more when the snow lay heavy upon their branches, sorely trying their aged strength to support its oppression, and giving the onlooker a vague sense of what the world would be if God were gone from it—then the old avenue was a place from which one with more imagination than courage would be ready to haste away, and seek instead the abodes of men. But Donal, though he dearly loved his neighbour, and that in the fullest concrete sense, was capable of loving the loneliest spots, for in such he was never alone.

It was altogether a neglected place. Long grass grew over its floor from end to end—cut now and then for hay, or to feed such animals as had grass in their stalls. Along one border, outside the trees, went a footpath—so little used that, though not quite conquered by the turf, the long grass often met over the top of it. Finding it so lonely, Donal grew more and more fond of it. It was his outdoor study, his *προσευχή*—a little aisle of the great temple! Seldom indeed was his reading or meditation there interrupted by sight of human being.

About a month after he had taken up his abode at the castle, he was lying one day in the grass with a book-companion, under the shade of one of the largest of its beeches, when he felt through the ground ere he heard through the air the feet of an approaching horse. As they came near, he raised his head to see. His unexpected appearance startled the horse, his rider nearly lost his

seat, and did lose his temper. Recovering the former, and holding the excited animal, which would have been off at full speed, he urged him towards Donal, whom he took for a tramp. He was rising—deliberately, that he might not do more mischief, and was yet hardly on his feet, when the horse, yielding to the spur, came straight at him, its rider with his whip lifted. Donal took off his bonnet, stepped a little aside, and stood. His bearing and countenance calmed the horseman's rage; there was something in them to which no gentleman could fail of response.

The rider was plainly one who had more to do with affairs bucolic than with those of cities or courts, but withal a man of conscious dignity, socially afloat, and able to hold his own.

"What the devil—," he cried—for nothing is so irritating to a horseman as to come near losing his seat, except perhaps to lose it altogether, and indignation against the cause of an untoward accident is generally a mortal's first consciousness thereupon: however foolishly, he feels himself injured. But there, having better taken in Donal's look, he checked himself.

"I beg your pardon, sir," said Donal. "It was foolish of me to show myself so suddenly; I might have thought it would startle most horses. I was too absorbed to have my wits about me."

The gentleman lifted his hat.

"I beg your pardon in return," he said with a smile which cleared every cloud from his face. "I took you for some one who had no business here; but I imagine you are the tutor at the castle, with as good a right as I have myself."

"You guess well, sir."

"Pardon me that I forget your name."

"My name is Donal Grant," returned Donal, with an accent on the *my* intending a wish to know in return that of the speaker.

"I am a Graeme," answered the other, "one of the clan, and factor to the earl. Come and see where I live. My sister will be glad to make your acquaintance. We lead rather a lonely life here, and don't see too many agreeable people."

"You call this lonely, do you!" said Donal thoughtfully. "—It is a grand place, anyhow!"

"You are right—as you see it now. But wait till winter! Then perhaps you will change your impression a little."

"Pardon me if I doubt whether you know what winter can be so well as I do. This east coast is by all accounts a bitter place, but I fancy it is only upon a great hill-side you can know the heart and soul of a snow-blast."

"I yield that," returned Mr. Graeme. "—It is bitter enough here though, and a mercy we can keep warm in-doors."

"Which is often more than we shepherd-folk can do," said Donal.

Mr. Graeme used to say afterwards he was never so immediately taken with a man. It was one of the charms of Donal's habit of being, that he never spoke as if he belonged to any other than the class in which he had been born and brought up. This came partly of pride in his father and mother, partly of inborn dignity, and partly of religion. To him the story of our Lord was the reality it is, and he rejoiced to know himself so nearly on the same social level of birth as the Master of his life and aspiration. It was Donal's one ambition—to give the high passion a low name—to be free with the freedom which was his natural inheritance, and which is to be gained only by obedience to the words of the Master. From the face of this aspiration fled every kind of pretence as from the light flies the darkness. Hence he was entirely and thoroughly a gentleman. What if his clothes were not even of the next to the newest cut! What if he had not been used to what is called society! He was far above such things. If he might but attain to the manners of the "high countries," manners which appear because they exist—because they are all through the man! He did not think what he might seem in the eyes of men. Courteous, helpful, considerate, always seeking first how far he could honestly agree with any speaker, opposing never save sweetly and apologetically—except indeed some utterance flagrantly unjust were in his ears—there was no man of true breeding, in or out of *society*, who would not have granted that Donal was fit company for any man or woman. Mr. Graeme's eye glanced down over the tall square-shouldered form, a little stooping from lack of drill and much meditation, but instantly straightening itself upon any inward stir, and he said to himself, "This is no common man!"

They were moving slowly along the avenue, Donal by the rider's near knee, talking away like men not unlikely soon to know each other better.

"You don't make much use of this avenue!" said Donal.

"No; its use is an old story. The castle was for a time deserted, and the family, then passing through a phase of comparative poverty, lived in the house we are in now—to my mind much the more comfortable."

"What a fine old place it must be, if such trees are a fit approach to it!"

"They were never planted for that; they are older far. Either there was a wood here, and the rest were cut down and these left, or there was once a house much older than the present. The

look of the garden, and some of the offices, favour the latter idea."

"I have never seen the house," said Donal.

"You have not then been much about yet?" said Mr. Graeme.

"I have been so occupied with my pupil, and so delighted with all that lay immediately around me, that I have gone nowhere—except, indeed, to see Andrew Comin, the cobbler."

"Ah, you know him! I have heard of him as a remarkable man. There was a clergyman here from Glasgow—I forget his name—so struck with him he seemed actually to take him for a prophet. He said he was a survival of the old mystics. For my part I have no turn for extravagance."

"But," said Donal, in the tone of one merely suggesting a possibility, "a thing that from the outside may seem an extravagance, may look quite different when you get inside it."

"The more reason for keeping out of it! If acquaintance must make you in love with it, the more air between you and it the better!"

"Would not such precaution as that keep you from gaining a true knowledge of many things? Nothing almost can be known from what people say."

"True; but there are things so plainly nonsense!"

"Yes; but there are things that seem to be nonsense, because the man thinks he knows what they are when he does not. Who would know the shape of a chair who took his idea of it from its shadow on the floor? What idea can a man have of religion who knows nothing of it except from what he hears at church?"

Mr. Graeme was not fond of going to church yet went: he was the less displeased with the remark. But he made no reply, and the subject dropped.

CHAPTER XX.

THE OLD GARDEN.

THE avenue seemed to Donal about to stop dead against a high wall, but ere they quite reached the end, they turned at right angles, skirted the wall for some distance, then turned again with it. It was a somewhat dreary wall—of gray stone, with mortar as gray—not like the rich-coloured walls of old red brick one meets in England. But its roof-like coping was crowned with

tufts of wall-plants, and a few lichens did something to relieve the grayness. It guided them to a farm-yard. Mr. Graeme left his horse at the stable, and led the way to the house.

They entered it by a back door whose porch was covered with ivy, and going through several low passages, came to the other side of the house. There Mr. Graeme showed Donal into a large, low-ceiled, old-fashioned drawing-room, smelling of ancient rose-leaves, their odour of sad hearts rather than of withered flowers—and leaving him went to find his sister.

Glancing about him Donal saw a window open to the ground, and went to it. Beyond lay a more fairy-like garden than he had ever dreamed of. But he had read of, though never looked on such, and seemed to know it from times of old. It was laid out in straight lines, with soft walks of old turf, and in it grew all kinds of straight aspiring things: their ambition seemed—to get up, not to spread abroad. He stepped out of the window, drawn as by the enchantment of one of childhood's dreams, and went wandering down a broad walk, his foot sinking deep in the velvety grass, and the loveliness of the dream did not fade. Hollyhocks, gloriously impatient, whose flowers could not wait to reach the top ere they burst into the flame of life, making splendid blots of colour along their ascending stalks, received him like stately dames of faerie, and enticed him, gently eager for more, down the long walks between rows of them—deep red and creamy white, primrose and yellow: sure they were leading him to some wonderful spot, some nest of lovely dreams and more lovely visions! The walk did lead to a bower of roses—a bed surrounded with a trellis, on which they climbed and made a huge bonfire—altar of incense rather, glowing with red and white flame. It seemed more glorious than his brain could receive. Seeing was hardly believing, but believing was more than seeing: though nothing is too good to be true, many things are too good to be grasped.

"Poor misbelieving birds of God," he said to himself, "we hover about a whole wood of the trees of life, venturing only here and there a peck, as if their fruit might be poison, and the design of our creation was our ruin! we shake our wise, owl-feathered heads, and declare they cannot be the trees of life: that were too good to be true! Ten times more consistent are they who deny there is a God at all, than they who believe in a middling kind of God—except indeed that they place in him a fitting faith!"

The thoughts rose gently in his full heart, as the flowers, one after the other, stole in at his eyes, looking up from the dark

earth like the spirits of its hidden jewels, which themselves could not reach the sun, exhaled in longing. Over grass which fondled his feet like the lap of an old nurse, he walked slowly round the bed of the roses, turning again towards the house. But there, half-way between him and it, was the lady of the garden descending to meet him!—not ancient like the garden, but young like its flowers, light-footed, and full of life.

Prepared by her brother to be friendly, she met him with a pleasant smile, and he saw that the light which shone in her dark eyes had in it rays of laughter. She had a dark, yet clear complexion, a good forehead, a nose after no recognized generation of noses, yet an attractive one, a mouth larger than to human judgment might have seemed necessary, yet a right pleasing mouth, with two rows of lovely teeth. All this Donal saw approach without dismay. He was no more shy with women than with men; while none the less his feeling towards them partook largely of the reverence of the ideal knight errant. He would not indeed have been shy in the presence of an angel of God; for his only courage came of truth, and clothed in the dignity of his reverence, he could look in the face of the lovely without perturbation. He would not have sought to hide from him whose voice was in the garden, but would have made haste to cast himself at his feet.

Bonnet in hand he advanced to meet Kate Graeme. She held out to him a well-shaped, good-sized hand, not ignorant of work—capable indeed of milking a cow to the cow's satisfaction. Then he saw that her chin was strong, and her dark hair not too tidy; that she was rather tall, and slenderly conceived though plumply carried out. Her light approach pleased him. He liked the way her foot pressed the grass. If Donal loved anything in the green world, it was neither roses nor hollyhocks, nor even sweet peas, but the grass that is trodden under foot, that springs in all waste places, and has so often to be glad of the dews of heaven to heal the hot cut of the scythe. He had long abjured the notion of anything in the vegetable kingdom being without some sense of life, without pleasure and pain also, in mild form and degree.

CHAPTER XXI.

A FIRST MEETING.

He took her hand, and felt it an honest one—a safe, comfortable hand.

"My brother told me he had brought you," she said. "I am glad to see you."

"You are very kind," said Donal. "How did either of you know of my existence? A few minutes back, I was not aware of yours."

Was it a rude utterance? He was silent a moment with the silence that promises speech, then added—

"Has it ever struck you how many born friends there are in the world who never meet—persons to love each other at first sight, but who never in this world have that sight?"

"No," returned Miss Graeme, with a merrier laugh than quite responded to the remark, "I certainly never had such a thought. I take the people that come, and never think of those who do not. But of course it must be so."

"To be in the world is to have a great many brothers and sisters you do not know!" said Donal.

"My mother told me," she rejoined, "of a man who had had so many wives and children that his son, whom she had met, positively did not know all his brothers and sisters."

"I suspect," said Donal, "we *have* to know our brothers and sisters."

"I do not understand."

"We have even got to feel a man is our brother the moment we see him," pursued Donal, enhancing his former remark.

"That sounds alarming!" said Miss Graeme, with another laugh. "My little heart feels not large enough to receive so many."

"The worst of it is," continued Donal, who once started was not ready to draw rein, "that those who chiefly advocate this extension of the family bonds, begin by loving their own immediate relations less than anybody else. Extension with them means slackening—as if any one could learn to love more by loving less, or go on to do better without doing well! He who loves his own little will not love others much."

"But how can we love those who are nothing to us?" objected Miss Graeme.

"That would be impossible. The family relations are for the sake of developing a love rooted in a far deeper though less recognized relation.—But I beg your pardon, Miss Graeme. Little Davie alone is my pupil, and I forget myself."

"I am very glad to listen to you," returned Miss Graeme. "I cannot say I am prepared to agree with you. But it is something, in this out-of-the-way corner, to hear talk from which it is even worth while to differ."

"Ah, you can have that here if you will!"

"Indeed!"

"I mean talk from which you would probably differ. There is an old man in the town who can talk better than ever I heard man before. But he is a poor man, with a despised handicraft, and none heed him. No community recognizes its great men till they are gone."

"Where is the use then of being great?" said Miss Graeme.

"To *be* great," answered Donal, "—to which the desire to be known of men is altogether destructive. To be great is to seem little in the eyes of men."

Miss Graeme did not answer. She was not accustomed to consider things seriously. A good girl in a certain true sense, she had never yet seen that she had to be better, or indeed to *be* anything. But she was able to feel, though she was far from understanding him, that Donal was in earnest, and that was much. To recognize that a man means something, is a great step towards understanding him.

"What a lovely garden this is!" remarked Donal after the sequent pause. "I have never seen anything like it."

"It is very old-fashioned," she returned. "Do you not find it very stiff and formal?"

"Stately and precise, I should rather say."

"I do not mean I can help liking it—in a way."

"Who could help liking it that took his feeling from the garden itself, not from what people said about it!"

"You cannot say it is like nature!"

"Yes; it is very like human nature. Man ought to learn of nature, but not to *imitate* nature. His work is, through the forms that Nature gives him, to express the idea or feeling that is in him. That is far more likely to produce things in harmony with nature, than the attempt to imitate nature upon the small human scale."

"You are too much of a philosopher for me!" said Miss Graeme. "I daresay you are quite right, but I have never read anything about art, and cannot follow you."

"You have probably read as much as I have. I am only talking out of what necessity, the necessity for understanding things, has made me think. One must get things brought together in one's thoughts, if only to be able to go on thinking."

This too was beyond Miss Graeme. The silence again fell, and Donal let it lie, waiting for her to break it this time.

CHAPTER XXII.

A TALK ABOUT GHOSTS.

But again he was the first.

They had turned and gone a good way down the long garden, and had again turned towards the house

"This place makes me feel as I never felt before," he said. "There is such a wonderful sense of vanished life about it. The whole garden seems dreaming about things of long ago—when troops of ladies, now banished into pictures, wandered about the place, each full of her own thoughts and fancies of life, each looking at everything with ways of thinking as old-fashioned as her garments. I could not be here after nightfall without feeling as if every walk were answering to unseen feet, as if every tree might be hiding some lovely form, returned to dream over old memories."

"Where is the good of fancying what is not true? I can't care for what I know to be nonsense!"

She was glad to find a spot where she could put down the foot of contradiction, for she came of a family known for what the neighbours called common sense, and in the habit of casting contempt upon everything characterized as superstition: she had now something to say for herself!

"How do you know it is nonsense?" asked Donald, looking round in her face with a bright smile.

"Not nonsense to keep imagining what nobody can see?"

"I *can* only imagine what I do not see."

"Nobody ever saw such creatures as you suppose in any garden! Then why fancy the dead so uncomfortable, or so ill looked after, that they come back to plague us!"

"Plainly they have never plagued you much!" rejoined Donal laughing. "But how often have you gone up and down these walks at dead of night?"

"Never once," answered Miss Graeme, not without a spark of indignation "I never was so absurd!"

"Then there may be a whole night-world that you know nothing about. You cannot tell that the place is not then thronged with ghosts · you have never given them a chance of appearing to you. I don't say it is so, for I know nothing, or at least little, about such things. I have had no experience of the sort any more than you—and I have been out whole nights on the mountains when I was a shepherd."

"Why then should you trouble your fancy about them?"

"Perhaps just for that reason."

"I do not understand you."

"I mean, because I can come into no communication with such a world as may be about me, I therefore imagine it. If, as often as I walked abroad at night, I met and held converse with the disembodied, I should use my imagination little, but make many notes of facts. When what may be makes no show, what more natural than to imagine about it? What is the imagination here for?"

"I do not know. The less one has to do with it the better."

"Then the thing, whatever it be, should not be called a faculty, but a weakness!"

"Yes."

"But the history of the world shows it could never have made progress without suggestions upon which to ground experiments: whence may these suggestions come if not from the weakness or impediment called the imagination?"

Again there was silence. Miss Graeme began to doubt whether it was possible to hold rational converse with a man who, the moment they began upon anything, went straight aloft into some high-flying region of which she knew and for which she cared nothing. But Donal's unconscious desire was in reality to meet her upon some common plane of thought. He always wanted to *meet* his fellow, and hence that abundance of speech, which, however poetic the things he said, not a few called prosiness.

"I should think," resumed Miss Graeme, "if you want to work your imagination, you will find more scope for it at the castle than here! This is a poor modern place compared to that."

"It is a poor imagination," returned Donal, "that requires age or any mere accessory to rouse it. The very absence of everything external, the bareness of the mere humanity involved, may in itself be an excitement greater than any accompaniment of the antique or the picturesque. But in this old-fashioned garden, in the midst of these old-fashioned flowers, with all the gentlenesses

of old-fashioned life suggested by them, it is easier to imagine the people themselves than where all is so cold, hard, severe—so much on the defensive, as in that huge, sullen pile on the hill-top."

"I am afraid you find it dull up there!" said Miss Graeme.

"Not at all," replied Donal; "I have there a most interesting pupil. But indeed one who has been used to spend day after day alone, clouds and heather and sheep and dogs his companions, does not depend much for pastime. Give me a chair and a table, fire enough to keep me from shivering, the few books I like best and writing materials, and I am absolutely content. But beyond these things I have at the castle a fine library—useless no doubt for most purposes of modern study, but full of precious old books. There I can at any moment be in the best of company! There is more of the marvellous in an old library than ever any magic could work!"

"I do not quite understand you," said the lady.

But she would have spoken nearer the truth if she had said she had not a glimmer of what he meant.

"Let me explain!" said Donal: "what could necromancy, which is one of the branches of magic, do for one at the best?"

"Well!" exclaimed Miss Graeme; "—but I suppose if you believe in ghosts, you may as well believe in raising them!"

"I did not mean to start any question about belief; I only wanted to suppose necromancy for the moment a fact, and put it at its best. *suppose* the magician could do for you all he professed, what would it amount to?—Only this—to bring before your eyes a shadowy resemblance of the form of flesh and blood, itself but a passing shadow, in which the man moved on the earth, and was known to his fellow-men? At best the necromancer might succeed in drawing from him some obscure utterance concerning your future, far more likely to destroy your courage than enable you to face what was before you; so that you would depart from your peep into the unknown, merely less able to encounter the duties of life."

"Whoever has a desire for such information must be made very different from me!" said Miss Graeme.

"Are you sure of that? Did you never make yourself unhappy about what might be on its way to you, and wish you could know beforehand something to guide you how to meet it?"

"I should have to think before answering that question."

"Now tell me—what can the art of writing, and its expansion, or perhaps its development rather, in printing, do in the same direction as necromancy? May not a man well long after

personal communication with this or that one of the greatest who have lived before him? I grant that in respect of some it can do nothing; but in respect of others, instead of mocking you with an airy semblance of their bodily forms, and the murmur of a few doubtful words from their lips, it places in your hands a key to their inmost thoughts. Some would say this is not personal communication; but it is far more personal than the other. A man's personality does not consist in the clothes he wears; it only appears in them; no more does it consist in his body, but in him who wears it."

As he spoke, Miss Graeme kept looking him gravely in the face, manifesting, however, more respect than interest. She had been accustomed to a very different tone in young men. She had found their main ambition to amuse; to talk sense about other matters than the immediate uses of this world, was an out-of-the-way thing! I do not say Miss Graeme, even on the subject last in hand, appreciated the matter of Donal's talk. She perceived he was in earnest, and happily was able to know a deep pond from a shallow one, but her best thought concerning him was—what a strange new specimen of humanity was here!

The appearance of her brother coming down the walk, put a stop to the conversation.

CHAPTER XXIII.

A TRADITION OF THE CASTLE.

"WELL," he said as he drew near, "I am glad to see you two getting on so well!"

"How do you know we are?" asked his sister, with something of the antagonistic tone which both in jest and earnest is too common between near relations.

"Because you have been talking incessantly ever since you met."

"We have been only contradicting each other."

"I could tell that too by the sound of your voices; but I took it for a good sign."

"I fear you heard mine almost only!" said Donal. "I talk too much, and I fear I have gathered the fault in a way that makes it difficult to cure."

"How was it?" asked Mr. Graeme.

"By having nobody to talk to. I learned it on the hill-side with the sheep, and in the meadows with the cattle. At college I thought I was nearly cured of it; but now, in my comparative solitude at the castle, it seems to have returned."

"Come here," said Mr. Graeme, "when you find it getting too much for you: my sister is quite equal to the task of re-curing you."

"She has not begun to use her power yet!" remarked Donal, as Miss Graeme, in hoydenish yet not ungraceful fashion, made an attempt to box the ear of her slanderous brother—a proceeding he had anticipated, and so was able to frustrate.

"When she knows you better," he said, "you will find my sister Kate more than your match."

"If I were a talker," she answered, "Mr. Grant would be too much for me: he quite bewilders me! What do you think! he has been actually trying to persuade me——"

"I beg your pardon, Miss Graeme; I have been trying to persuade you of nothing."

"What! not to believe in ghosts and necromancy and witch-craft and the evil eye and ghouls and vampyres, and I don't know what all out of nursery stories and old annuals?"

"I give you my word, Mr. Graeme," returned Donal, laughing, "I have not been persuading your sister of any of these things! I am certain she could be persuaded of nothing of which she did not first see the common sense. What I did dwell upon, without a doubt she would accept it, was the evident fact that writing and printing have done more to bring us into personal relations with the great dead, than necromancy, granting the magician the power he claimed, could ever do. For do we not come into contact with the being of a man when we hear him pour forth his thoughts of the things he likes best to think about, into the ear of the universe? In such a position does the book of a great man place us!—That was what I meant to convey to your sister."

"And," said Mr. Graeme, "she was not such a goose as to fail of understanding you, however she may have chosen to put on the garb of stupidity."

"I am sure," persisted Kate, "Mr. Grant talked so as to make me think he believed in necromancy and all that sort of thing!"

"That may be," said Donal; "but I did not try to persuade you to believe."

"Oh, if you hold me to the letter!" cried Miss Graeme, colouring a little.—"It would be impossible to get on with such a man," she thought, "for he not only preached when you had no

pulpit to protect you from him, but stuck so to his text that there was no amusement to be got out of the business!"

She did not know that if she could have met him, breaking the ocean-tide of his thoughts with fitting opposition, his answers would have come short and sharp as the flashes of waves on rocks.

"If Mr. Grant believes in such things," said Mr. Graeme, "he must find himself at home in the castle, every room of which may well be the haunt of some weary ghost!"

"I do not believe," said Donal, "that any work of man's hands, however awful with crime done in it, can have nearly such an influence for belief in the marvellous, as the still presence of live Nature. I never saw an old castle before—at least not to make any close acquaintance with it, but there is not an aspect of the grim old survival up there, interesting as every corner of it is, that moves me like the mere thought of a hill-side with the veil of the twilight coming down over it, making of it the last step of a stair for the descending foot of the Lord."

"Surely, Mr. Grant, you do not expect such a personal advent!" said Miss Graeme.

"I should not like to say what I do or don't expect," answered Donal—and held his peace, for he saw he was but casting stumbling-blocks.

The silence grew awkward; and Mr. Graeme's good breeding called on him to say something; he supposed Donal felt himself snubbed by his sister.

"If you are fond of the marvellous, though, Mr. Grant," he said, "there are some old stories about the castle would interest you. One of them was brought to my mind the other day in the town. It is strange how superstition seems to have its ebbs and flows! A story or legend will go to sleep, and after a time revive with fresh interest, no one knows why."

"Probably," said Donal, "it is when the tale comes to ears fitted for its reception. They are now in many counties trying to get together and store the remnants of such tales: possibly the wind of some such inquiry may have set old people recollecting, and young people inventing. That would account for a good deal—would it not?"

"Yes, but not for all, I think. There has been no such inquiry made anywhere near us, so far as I am aware. I went to the Morven Arms last night to meet a tenant, and found the tradesmen were talking, over their toddy, of various events at the castle, and especially of one, the most frightful of all. It should have been forgotten by this time, for the ratio of forgetting increases."

"I should like much to hear it!" said Donal.

"Do tell him, Hector," said Miss Graeme, "and I will watch his hair."

"It is the hair of those who mock at such things you should watch," returned Donal. "Their imagination is so rarely excited that, when it is, it affects their nerves more than the belief of others affects theirs."

"Now I have you!" cried Miss Graeme. "There you confess yourself a believer!"

"I fear you have come to too general a conclusion. Because I believe the Bible, do I believe everything that comes from the pulpit? Some tales I should reject with a contempt that would satisfy even Miss Graeme; of others I should say—'These seem as if they might be true;' and of still others, 'These ought to be true, I think.'—But do tell me the story."

"It is not," replied Mr. Graeme, "a very peculiar one—certainly not peculiar to our castle, though unique in some of its details; a similar legend belongs to several houses in Scotland, and is to be found, I fancy, in other countries as well. There is one not far from here, around whose dark basements—or hoary battlements—who shall say which?—floats a similar tale. It is of a hidden room, whose position or entrance nobody knows. Whether it belongs to our castle by right I cannot tell."

"A species of report," said Donal, "very likely to arise by a kind of cryptogamic generation! The common people, accustomed to the narrowest dwellings, gazing on the huge proportions of the place, and upon occasion admitted, and walking through a succession of rooms and passages, to them as intricate and confused as a rabbit-warren, must be very ready, I should think, to imagine the existence within such a pile, of places unknown even to the inhabitants of it themselves!—But I beg your pardon: do tell us the story."

"Mr. Grant," said Kate, "you perplex me! I begin to doubt if you have any principles. One moment you take one side and the next the other!"

"No, no; I but love my own side too well to let any traitors into its ranks: I would have nothing to do with lies."

"They are all lies together!"

"Then I want to hear this one," said Donal.

"I daresay you have heard it before!" remarked Mr. Graeme, and began.

"It was in the earldom of a certain recklessly wicked wretch, who not only robbed his poor neighbours, and even killed them when they opposed him, but went so far as to behave as wickedly

on the Sabbath as on any other day of the week. Late one Saturday night, a company were seated in the castle, playing cards, and drinking; and all the time Sunday was drawing nearer and nearer, and nobody heeding. At length one of them, seeing the hands of the clock at a quarter to twelve, made the remark that it was time to stop. He did not mention the sacred day, but all knew what he meant. The earl laughed, and said, if he was afraid of the kirk-session, he might go, and another would take his hand. But the man sat still, and said no more till the clock gave the warning. Then he spoke again, and said the day was almost out, and they ought not to go on playing into the Sabbath. And as he uttered the word, his mouth was pulled all on one side. But the earl struck his fist on the table, and swore a great oath that if any man rose he would run him through. 'What care I for the Sabbath!' he said. 'I gave you your chance to go,' he added, turning to the man who had spoken, who was dressed in black like a minister, 'and you would not take it: now you shall sit where you are.' He glared fiercely at him, and the man returned him an equally fiery stare. And now first they began to discover what, through the fumes of the whisky and the smoke of the pine-torches, they had not observed, namely, that none of them knew the man, or had ever seen him before. They looked at him, and could not turn their eyes from him, and a cold terror began to creep through their vitals. He kept his fierce scornful look fixed on the earl for a moment, and then spoke. 'And I gave you your chance,' he said, 'and you would not take it: now you shall sit still where you are, and no Sabbath shall you ever see.' The clock began to strike, and the man's mouth came straight again. But when the hammer had struck eleven times, it struck no more, and the clock stopped. 'This day twelvemonth,' said the man, 'you shall see me again; and so every year till your time is up. I hope you will enjoy your game!' The earl would have sprung to his feet, but could not stir, and the man was nowhere to be seen. He was gone, taking with him both door and windows of the room—not as Samson carried off the gates of Gaza, however, for he left not the least sign of where they had been. From that day to this no one has been able to find the room. There the wicked earl and his companions still sit, playing with the same pack of cards, and waiting their doom. It has been said that, on that same day of the year—only, unfortunately, testimony differs as to the day—shouts of drunken laughter may be heard issuing from somewhere in the castle; but as to the direction whence they come, none can ever agree. That is the story."

"A very good one!" said Donal. "I wonder what the ground of it is! It must have had its beginning!"

"Then you don't believe it?" said Miss Graeme.

"Not quite," he replied. "But I have myself had a strange experience up there."

"What! you have seen something?" cried Miss Graeme, her eyes growing bigger.

"No; I have seen nothing," answered Donal, "—only heard something.—One night, the first I was there indeed, I heard the sound of a far-off musical instrument, faint and sweet."

The brother and sister exchanged looks. Donal went on.

"I got up and felt my way down the winding stair—I sleep at the top of Baliol's tower—but at the bottom lost myself, and had to sit down and wait for the light. Then I heard it again, but seemed no nearer to it than before. I have never heard it since, and have never mentioned the thing. I presume, however, that speaking of it to you can do no harm. You at least will not raise any fresh rumours to injure the respectability of the castle! Do you think there is any instrument in it from which such a sound might have proceeded? Lady Arctura is a musician, I am told, but surely was not likely to be at her piano 'in the dead waste and middle of the night'!"

"It is impossible to say how far a sound may travel in the stillness of the night, when there are no other sound-waves to cross and break it."

"That is all very well, Hector," said his sister; "but you know Mr. Grant is neither the first nor the second that has heard that sound!"

"One thing is pretty clear," said her brother, "it can have nothing to do with the revellers at their cards! The sound reported is very different from any attributed to them!"

"Are you sure," suggested Donal, "that there was not a violin shut up with them? Even if none of them could play, there has been time enough to learn. The sound I heard might have been that of a ghostly violin. Though like that of a stringed instrument, it was different from anything I had ever heard before—except perhaps certain equally inexplicable sounds occasionally heard among the hills."

They went on talking about the thing for a while, pacing up and down the garden, the sun hot above their heads, the grass cool under their feet.

"It is enough," said Miss Graeme, with a rather forced laugh, "to make one glad the castle does not go with the title."

"Why so?" asked Donal.

"Because," she answered, "were anything to happen to the boys up there, Hector would come in for the title."

"I'm not of my sister's mind!" said Mr. Graeme, laughing more genuinely. "A title with nothing to keep it up is a simple misfortune. I certainly should not take out the patent. No wise man would lay claim to a title without the means to make it respected."

"Have we come to that!" exclaimed Donal. "Must even the old titles of the country be buttressed into respectability with money? Away in quiet places, reading old history books, we peasants are accustomed to think differently. If some millionaire money-lender were to buy the old keep of Arundel castle, you would respect him just as much as the present earl!"

"I would not," said Mr. Graeme. "I confess you have the better of me.—But is there not a fallacy in your argument?" he added, thinkingly.

"I believe not. If the title is worth nothing without the money, the money must be more than the title!—If I were Lazarus," Donal went on, "and the inheritor of a title, I would use it, if only for a lesson to Dives up stairs. I scorn to think that honour should wait on the heels of wealth. You may think it is because I am and always shall be a poor man; but if I know myself it is not therefore. At the same time a title is but a trifle; and if you had given any other reason for not using it than homage to Mammon, I should have said nothing."

"For my part," said Miss Graeme, "I have no quarrel with riches except that they do not come my way. I should know how to use and not abuse them!"

Donal made no other reply than to turn a look of divinely stupid surprise and pity upon the young woman. It was of no use to say anything! Were argument absolutely triumphant, Mammon would sit just where he was before! He had marked the great indifference of the Lord to the convincing of the understanding: when men knew the thing itself, then and not before would they understand its relations and reasons!

If truth belongs to the human soul, then the soul is able to see it and know it: if it do the truth, it takes therein the first possible, and almost the last necessary step towards understanding it.

Miss Graeme caught his look, and must have perceived its expression, for her face flushed a more than rosy red, and the conversation grew crumbly.

It was a half-holiday, and he stayed to tea, and after it went over the farm-buildings with Mr. Graeme, revealing such a practical knowledge of all that was going on, that his entertainer soon saw his opinion must be worth something whether his fancies were or not.

CHAPTER XXIV.

STEPHEN KENNEDY.

THE great comforts of Donal's life, next to those of the world in which his soul lived—the eternal world, whose doors are ever open to him who prays—were the society of his favourite books, the fashioning of his thoughts into sweetly ordered sounds in the lofty solitude of his chamber, and not infrequent communion with the cobbler and his wife. To these he had as yet said nothing of what went on at the castle: he had learned the lesson the cobbler himself gave him. But many a lesson of greater value did he learn from the philosopher of the lapstone. He who understands because he endeavours, is a freed man of the realm of human effort. He who has no experience of his own, to him the experience of others is a sealed book. The convictions that in Donal rose vaporous were rapidly condensed and shaped when he found his new friend thought likewise.

By degrees he made more and more of a companion of Davie, and such was the sweet relation between them that he would sometimes have him in his room even when he was writing. When it was time to lay in his winter-fuel, he said to him—

"Up here, Davie, we must have a good fire when the nights are long; the darkness will be like solid cold. Simmons tells me I may have as much coal and wood as I like: will you help me to get them up?"

Davie sprang to his feet: he was ready that very minute.

"I shall never learn my lessons if I am cold," added Donal, who could not bear a low temperature so well as when he was always in the open air.

"Do you learn lessons, Mr. Grant?"

"Yes indeed I do," replied Donal. "One great help to the understanding of things is to brood over them as a hen broods over her eggs: words are thought-eggs, and their chickens are truths; and in order to brood I sometimes learn by heart. I have set myself to learn, before the winter is over if I can, the gospel of John in the Greek."

"What a big lesson!" exclaimed Davie.

"Ah, but how rich it will make me!" said Donal, and that set Davie pondering.

They began to carry up the fuel, Donal taking the coals, and Davie the wood. But Donal got weary of the time it took, and

set himself to find a quicker way. So next Saturday afternoon, the rudimentary remnant of the Jewish Sabbath, and the school-boy's weekly carnival before Lent, he directed his walk to a certain fishing village, the nearest on the coast, about three miles off, and there succeeded in hiring a spare boat-spar with a block and tackle. The spar he ran out, through a notch of the battlement, near the sheds, and having stayed it well back, rove the rope through the block at the peak of it, and lowered it with a hook at the end. A moment of Davie's help below, and a bucket filled with coals was on its way up: this part of the roof was over a yard belonging to the household offices, and Davie filled the bucket from a heap they had there made. "Stand back, Davie," Donal would cry, and up would go the bucket, to the ever renewed delight of the boy. When it reached the block, Donal, by means of a guy, swung the spar on its but-end, and the bucket came to the roof through the next notch of the battlement. There he would empty it, and in a moment it would be down again to be re-filled. When he thought he had enough of coal, he turned to the wood; and thus they spent an hour of a good many of the cool evenings of autumn. Davie enjoyed it immensely; and it was no small thing for a boy delicately nurtured to be helped out of the feeling that he must have every thing done for him. When after a time he saw the heap on the roof, he was greatly impressed with the amount that could be done by little and little. In return Donal told him that if he worked well through the week, he should every Saturday evening spend an hour with him by the fire he had thus helped to provide, and they would then do something together.

After his first visit Donal went again and again to the village: he had made acquaintance with some of the people, and liked them. There was one man, however, who, although, attracted by his look despite its apparent sullenness, he had tried to draw him into conversation, seemed to avoid, almost to resent his advances. But one day as he was walking home, Stephen Kennedy overtook him, and saying he was going in his direction, walked alongside of him—to the pleasure of Donal, who loved all humanity, and especially the portion of it acquainted with hard work. He was a middle-sized young fellow, with a slouching walk, but a well shaped and well set head, and a not uncomely countenance. He was brown as sun and salt sea-winds could make him, and had very blue eyes and dark hair, telling of Norwegian ancestry. He lounged along with his hands in his pockets, as if he did not care to walk, yet got over the ground as fast as Donal, who, with yet some remnant of the peasant's

stride, covered the ground as if he meant walking. After their greeting a great and enduring silence fell, which lasted till the journey was half-way over; then all at once the fisherman spoke.

"There's a lass at the castel, sir," he said, "they ca' Eppy Comin."

"There is," answered Donal.

"Do ye ken the lass, sir—to speak til her, I mean?"

"Surely," replied Donal. "I know her grandfather and grandmother well."

"Dacent fowk!" said Stephen.

"They are that!" responded Donal, "—as good people as I know!"

"Wud ye du them a guid turn?" asked the fisherman.

"Indeed I would!"

"Weel, it's this, sir: I hae grit doobts gien a' be gaein' verra weel wi' the lass at the castel."

As he said the words he turned his head aside, and spoke so low and in such a muffled way that Donal could but just make out what he said.

"You must be a little plainer if you would have me do anything," he returned.

"I'll be richt plain wi' ye, sir," answered Stephen, and then fell silent as if he would never speak again.

Donal waited, nor uttered a sound. At last he spoke once more.

"Ye maun ken, sir," he said, "I hae had a fancy to the lass this mony a day; for ye'll alloo she's baith bonny an' winsome!"

Donal did not reply, for although he was ready to grant her bonny, he had never felt her winsome.

"Weel," he went on, "her an' me 's been coortin' this twa year; an' guid freen's we aye was till this last spring, whan a' at ance she turnt highty-tighty like, nor, du what I micht, could I get her to say what it was 'at cheengt her: sae far as I kenned I had dune naething, nor wad she say I had gi'en her ony cause o' complaint. But though she couldna say I had ever gi'en mair nor a ceevil word to ony lass but hersel', she appeart unco wullin' to fix me wi' this ane an' that ane or ony ane! I couldna think what had come ower her! But at last—an' a sair last it is!—I hae come to the un'erstan'in o' 't: she wud fain hae a pretence for br'akin' wi' me! She wad hae 't 'at I was duin' as she was duin' hersel'—haudin' company wi' anither!"

"Are you quite sure of what you say?" asked Donal.

"Ower sure, sir, though I'm no at leeberty to tell ye hoo I cam to be. Dinna think, sir, 'at I'm ane to haud a lass til her

word whan her hert disna back it; I wud hae said naething aboot it, but jist borne the hert-brak wi' the becomin' silence, for greitin' nor ragin' men' no nets, nor tak the life o' nae dogfish. But it's God's trowth, sir, I'm terrible feart for the lassie hersel'. She's that ta'en up wi' him, they tell me, 'at she can think o' naething but him; an' he's a yoong lord, no a puir lad like me—an' that's what fears me!"

A great dread and a great compassion together laid hold of Donal, but he did not speak.

"Gien it cam to that," resumed Stephen, "I doobt the fisher-lad wud win her better breid nor my lord; for gien a' tales be true, he wud hae to work for his ain breid: the castel 's no his, nor canna be 'cep' he merry the leddy o' 't. But it's no merryin' Eppy he'll be efter, or ony the likes o' 'im!"

"You don't surely hint," said Donal, "that there's anything between her and lord Forgue? She must be an idle girl to take such a thing into her head!"

"I wuss weel she hae ta'en 't intil her heid! she'll get it the easier oot o' her hert? But 'deed, sir, I'm sair feart! I speakna o' 't for my ain sake; for gien there be trowth intil't, there can never be mair 'atween her and me! But, eh, sir, the peety o' 't wi' sic a bonny lass!—for he canna mean fair by her! Thae gran' fowk does fearsome things! It's sma' won'er 'at whiles the puir fowk rises wi' a roar, an' tears doon a', as they did i' France!"

"All you say is quite true; but the charge is such a serious one!"

"It is that, sir! But though it be true, I'm no gaein' to mak it 'afore the warl'."

"You are right there: it could do no good."

"I fear it may du as little whaur I am gaein' to mak it! I'm upo' my ro'd to gar my lord gie an accoont o' himsel'. Faith, gien it bena a guid ane, I'll thraw the neck o' 'im! It's better me to hang, nor her to gang disgraced, puir thing! She can be naething mair to me, as I say; but I wud like weel the wringin' o' a lord's neck! It wud be like killin' a shark!"

"Why do you tell me this?" asked Donal.

"'Cause I look to you to get me to word o' the man."

"That you may wring his neck?—You should not have told me that: I should be art and part in his murder!"

"Wud ye hae me lat the lassie tak her chance ohn dune onything?" said the fisherman with scorn.

"By no means. I would do something myself whoever the girl was—and she is the grand daughter of my best friends."

"Sir, ye winna surely fail me!"

"I will help you somehow, but I will not do what you want me. I will turn the thing over in my mind. I promise you I will do something—what, I cannot say offhand. You had better go home again, and I will come to you to-morrow."

"Na, na, that winna do!" said the man, half doggedly, half fiercely. "The hert ill be oot o' my body gien I dinna du something! This verra nicht it maun be dune! I canna bide in hell ony langer. The thoucht o' the rascal slaverin' his lees ower my Eppy 's killin' me! My brain 's like a fire: I see the verra billows o' the ocean as reid 's blude."

"If you come near the castle to-night, I will have you taken up. I am too much your friend to see you hanged! But if you go home and leave the matter to me, I will do my best, and let you know. She shall be saved if I can compass it. What, man! you would not have God against you?"

"He'll be upo' the side o' the richt, I'm thinkin'!"

"Doubtless; but he has said, 'Vengeance is mine!' He can't trust us with that. He won't have us interfering. It's more his concern than yours yet that the lassie have fair play. I will do my part."

They walked on in gloomy silence for some time. Suddenly the fisherman put out his hand, seized Donal's with a convulsive grasp, was possibly reassured by the strength with which Donal's responded, turned, and without a word went back.

Donal had to think. Here was a most untoward affair! What could he do? What ought he to attempt? From what he had seen of the young lord, he could not believe he intended wrong to the girl; but he might he selfishly amusing himself, and was hardly one to reflect that the least idle familiarity with her was a wrong! The thing, if there was the least truth in it, must be put a stop to at once! but it might be all a fancy of the justly jealous lover, to whom the girl had not of late been behaving as she ought! Or might there not be somebody else? At the same time there was nothing absurd in the idea that a youth, fresh from college and suddenly discompanioned at home, without society, possessed by no love of literature, and with almost no amusements, should, if only for very *ennui*, be attracted by the pretty face and figure of Eppy, and then enthralled by her coquetries of instinctive response. There was danger to the girl both in silence and in speech: if there was no ground for the apprehension, the very supposition was an injury—might even suggest the thing it was intended to frustrate! Still something must be risked! He had just been reading in sir Philip Sidney, that "whosoever in great things will think to prevent all objections,

must lie still and do nothing." But what was he to do? The readiest and simplest thing was to go to the youth, tell him what he had heard, and ask him if there was any ground for it. But they must find the girl another situation! in either case distance must be put between them! He would tell her grandparents; but he feared, if there was any truth in it, they would have no great influence with her. If, on the other hand, the thing was groundless, they might make it up between her and her fisherman, and have them married! She might only have been teasing him!—He would certainly speak to the young lord! Yet again, what if he should actually put the mischief into his thoughts! If there should be ever so slight a leaning in the direction, might he not so give a sudden and fatal impulse? He would take the housekeeper into his counsel! She must understand the girl! Things would at once show themselves to her on the one side or the other, which might reveal the path he ought to take. But did he know mistress Brookes well enough? Would she be prudent, or spoil everything by precipitation? She might ruin the girl if she acted without sympathy, caring only to get the appearance of evil out of the house!

The way the legally righteous act the policeman in the moral world would be amusing were it not so sad. They are always making the evil "move on," driving it to do its mischiefs to other people instead of them; dispersing nests of the degraded to crowd them the more, and with worse results, in other parts: why should such be shocked at the idea of sending out of the world those to whom they will not give a place in it to lay their heads? They treat them in this world as, according to the old theology, their God treats them in the next, keeping them alive for sin and suffering.

Some with the bright lamp of their intellect, others with the smoky lamp of their life, cast a shadow of God on the wall of the universe, and then believe or disbelieve in the shadow.

Donal was still in meditation when he reached home, and still undecided what he should do. Crossing a small court on his way to his aerie, he saw the housekeeper making signs to him from the window of her room. He turned and went to her. It was of Eppy she wanted to speak to him! How often is the discovery of a planet, of a truth, of a scientific fact, made at once in different places far apart! She asked him to sit down, and got him a glass of milk, which was his favourite refreshment, little imagining the expression she attributed to fatigue arose from the very thing occupying her own thoughts.

"It's a queer thing," she began, "for an auld wife like me to

come til a yoong gentleman like yersel', sir, wi' sic a tale; but, as the sayin' is, 'needs maun whan the deil drives'; an' here's like to be an unco stramash aboot the place, gien we comena thegither upo' some gait oot o' 't. Dinna luik sae scaret like, sir; we may be in time yet er' the warst come to the warst, though it's some ill to say what may be the warst in sic an ill coopered kin' o' affair! There's thae twa fules o' bairns—troth, they're nae better; an' the tane 's jist as muckle to blame as the tither—only the lass is waur to blame nor the lad, bein' made sharper, an' kennin' better nor him what comes o' sic!—Eh, but she *is* a gowk!"

Here Mrs. Brookes paused, lost in contemplation of the gowkedness of Eppy.

She was a florid, plump, good-looking woman, over forty, with thick auburn hair, brushed smooth—one of those women comely in soul as well as body, who are always to the discomfiture of wrong and the healing of strife. Left a young widow, she had refused many offers: once was all that was required of her in the way of marriage! She had found her husband good enough not to be followed by another, and marriage hard enough to favour the same result. When she sat down, smoothing her apron on her lap, and looking him in the face with clear blue eyes, he must have been either a suspicious or an unfortunate man who would not trust her. She was a general softener of shocks, foiler of encounters, and soother of angers. She was not one of those housekeepers always in black silk and lace, but was mostly to be seen in a cotton gown—very clean, but by no means imposing. She would put her hands to anything—show a young servant how a thing ought to be done, or relieve cook or housemaid who was ill or had a holiday. Donal had *taken* to her, as like does to like.

He did not hurry her, but waited.

"I may as weel gie ye the haill story, sir!" she recommenced. "Syne ye'll be whaur I am mysel'.

"I was oot i' the yard to luik efter my hens—I never lat onybody but mysel' meddle wi' them, for they're jist as easy sp'ilt as ither fowk's bairns; an' the twa doors o' the barn stan'in open, I took the straucht ro'd throuw the same to win the easier at my feathert fowk, as my auld minnie used to ca' them. I'm but a saft kin' o' a bein', as my faither used to tell me, an' mak but little din whaur I gang, sae they couldna hae h'ard my fut as I gaed; but what sud *I* hear—but I maun tell ye it was i' the gloamin' last nicht, an' I wad hae tellt ye the same this mornin', sir, seekin' yer fair coonsel, but ye was awa' 'afore I kenned, an' I was resolvt no to lat onither gloamin' come ohn ta'en precau-

tions—what sud I hear, I say, as I was sayin', but a laich tshe—tshe—tshe, somewhaur, I couldna tell whaur, as gien some had mair to say nor wud be spoken oot! Weel, ye see, bein' ane accoontable tae ithers for them 'at's accoontable to me, I stude still an' hearkent: gien a' was richt, nane wad be the waur for me; an' gien a' wasna richt, a' sud be wrang gien I could make it sae! Weel, as I say, I hearkent—but eh, sir! jist gie a keek oot at that door, an' see gein there bena somebody there hearkin', for that Eppy—I wudna lippen til her ae hair! she's as sly as an edder! Naebody there? Weel, steek ye the door, sir, an' I s' gang on wi' my tale. I stude an' hearkent, as I was sayin', an' what sud I hear but a twasome toot-moot, as my auld auntie frae Ebberdeen wud hae ca'd it—ae v'ice that o' a man, an' the ither that o' a wuman, for it's strange the differ even whan baith speyks their laichest! I was aye gleg i' the hearin', an' hae reason for the same to be thankfu,' but I couldna, for a' my sharpness, mak oot what they war sayin'. So, whan I saw 'at I wasna to hear, I jist set aboot seein', an' as quaietly as my saft fit—it's safter nor it's licht—wud carry me, I gaed aboot the barnflure, luikin' whaur onybody could be hidden awa'.

"There was a great heap o' strae in ae corner, no hard again' the wa'; an' 'atween the wa' an' that heap o' thrashen strae, sat the twa. Up gat my lord wi' a spang, as gien he had been ta'en stealin'. Eppy wud hae bidden, an' creepit oot like a moose ahint my back, but I was ower sharp for her: 'Come oot o' that, my lass,' says I. 'Oh, mistress Brookes!' says my lord, unco ceevil, 'for my sake don't be hard upon her.' Noo that angert me! For though *I* say the lass is mair to blame nor the lad, it's no for the lad, be he lord or labourer, to lea' himsel' oot whan the blame comes. An' says I, 'My lord,' says I, 'ye oucht to ken better! I s' say nae mair i' the noo, for I'm ower angry. Gang yer ways—but na! no thegither, my lord! I s' luik weel to that!—Gang up til yer ain room, Eppy!' I said, 'an' gien I dinna see ye there whan I come in, it's awa' to your grannie I gang this varra nicht!'

"Eppy she gaed; an' my lord he stude there, wi' a face 'at glowert white throuw the gloamin'. I turned upon him like a wild beast, an' says I, 'I winna speir what ye 're up til, my lord, but ye ken weel eneuch what it luiks like! an' I wud never hae expeckit it o' ye!' He began an' he stammert, an' he beggit me to believe there was naething 'atween them, an' he wudna harm the lassie to save his life, an' a' the lave o' 't, 'at I couldna i' my hert but pity them baith—twa sic bairns, doobtless drawn thegither wi' nae thoucht o' ill, ilk ane

by the bonny face o' the ither, as is but nait'ral, though it canna be allooed! He beseekit me sae sair 'at I foolishly promised no to tell his faither gien he on his side wud promise no to hae mair to du wi' Eppy. An' that he did. Noo I never had reason to doobt my yoong lord's word, but in a case o' this kin' it's aye better no to lippen. Ony gait, the thing canna be left this wise, for gien ill cam o' 't, whaur wud we a' be! I didna promise no to tell onybody; I'm free to tell yersel,' maister Grant; an' ye maun contrive what's to be dune."

"I will speak to him," said Donal, "and see what humour he is in. That will help to clear the thing up. We will try to do right, and trust to be kept from doing wrong."

Donal left her to go to his room, but had not reached the top of the stair when he saw clearly that he must speak to lord Forgue at once: he turned and went down to a room that was called his.

When he reached it, only Davie was there, turning over the leaves of a folio worn by fingers that had been dust for centuries. He said Percy went out, and would not let him go with him.

Knowing mistress Brookes was looking after Eppy, Donal put off seeking farther for Forgue till the morrow.

CHAPTER XXV.

EVASION.

THE next day he could find him nowhere, and in the evening went to see the Comins. It was pretty dark, but the moon would be up by and by.

When he reached the cobbler's house, he found him working as usual, only in-doors now that the weather was colder, and the light sooner gone. He looked innocent, bright, and contented as usual. "If God be at peace," he would say to himself, "why should not I?" Once he said this aloud, almost unconsciously, and was overheard: it strengthened the regard with which worldly church-goers regarded him: he was to them an irreverent, yea, blasphemous man! They did not know God enough to understand the cobbler's words, and all the interpretation they could give them was after their kind. Their long Sunday faces indicated their reward; the cobbler's cheery, expectant look indicated his.

The two were just wondering a little when he entered, that young Eppy had not made her appearance; but then, as her grandmother said, she had often, especially during the last few weeks, been later still! As she spoke, however, they heard her light, hurried foot on the stair.

"Here she comes at last!" said her grandmother, and she entered.

She said she could not get away so easily now. Donal feared she had begun to lie. After sitting a quarter of an hour, she rose suddenly, and said she must go, for she was wanted at home. Donal rose also and said, as the night was dark, and the moon not yet up, it would be better to go together. Her face flushed: she had to go into the town first, she said, to get something she wanted! Donal replied he was in no hurry, and would go with her. She cast an inquiring, almost suspicious look on her grandparents, but made no further objection, and they went out together.

They walked to the High Street, and to the shop where Donal had encountered the parson. He waited in the street till she came out. Then they walked back the way they had come, little thinking, either of them, that their every step was dogged. Kennedy, the fisherman, firm in his promise not to go near the castle, could not therefore remain quietly at home: he knew it was Eppy's day for visiting her folk, went to the town, and had been lingering about in the hope of seeing her. Not naturally suspicious, justifiable jealousy had rendered him such; and when he saw the two together he began to ask whether Donal's anxiety to keep him from encountering lord Forgue might not be due to other grounds than those given or implied. So he followed, careful they should not see him.

They came to a baker's shop, and, stopping at the door, Eppy, in a voice that in vain sought to be steady, asked Donal if he would be so good as wait for her a moment, while she went in to speak to the baker's daughter. Donal made no difficulty, and she entered, leaving the door open as she found it.

Lowrie Leper's shop was lighted with only one dip, too dim almost to show the sugar biscuits and peppermint drops in the window, that drew all day the hungry eyes of the children. A pleasant smell of bread came from it, and did what it could to entertain him in the all but deserted street. While he stood no one entered or issued.

"She's having a long talk!" he said to himself, but for a long time was not impatient. He began at length, however, to fear she must have been taken ill, or have found something wrong

in the house. When more than half an hour was gone, he thought it time to make inquiry.

He entered therefore, shutting the door and opening it again, to ring the spring-bell, then mechanically closing it behind him. Straightway Mrs. Leper appeared from somewhere to answer the squall of the shrill-tongued summoner. Donal asked if Eppy was ready to go. The woman stared at him a moment in silence.

"Eppy wha, said ye?" she asked at length.

"Eppy Comin," he answered.

"I ken naething aboot her.—Lucy!"

A good-looking girl, with a stocking she was darning drawn over one hand and arm, followed her mother into the shop.

"Whaur's Eppy Comin, gien ye please?" asked Donal.

"I ken naething aboot her. I haena seen her sin' this day week," answered the girl in a very straight-forward manner.

Donal saw he had been tricked, but judging it better to seek no elucidation, turned with apology to go.

As he opened the door, there came through the house from behind a blast of cold wind: there was an open outer door in that direction! The girl must have slipped through the house, and out by that door, leaving her squire to cool himself, vainly expectant, in the street! If she had found another admirer, as probably she imagined, his polite attentions were at the moment inconvenient!

But she had tried the trick too often, for she had once served her fisherman in like fashion. Seeing her go into the baker's, Kennedy had conjectured her purpose, and hurrying toward the issue from the other exit, saw her come out of the court, and was again following her.

Donal hastened homeward. The moon rose. It was a lovely night. Dull-gleaming glimpses of the river came through the light fog that hovered over it in the rising moon like a spirit-river continually ascending from the earthly one and resting upon it, but flowing in heavenly places. The white webs shone very white in the moon, and the green grass looked gray. A few minutes more, and the whole country was covered with a low-lying fog, on whose upper surface the moon shone, making it appear to Donal's wondering eyes a wide-spread inundation, from which rose half-submerged houses and stacks and trees. One who had never seen the thing before, and who did not know the country, would not have doubted he looked on a veritable expanse of water. Absorbed in the beauty of the sight he trudged on.

Suddenly he stopped: were those the sounds of a scuffle he heard on the road before him? He ran. At the next turn, in the

loneliest part of the way, he saw something dark, like the form of a man, lying in the middle of the road. He hastened to it. The moon gleamed on a pool beside it. A death-like face looked heavenward: it was that of lord Forgue—without breath or motion. There was a cut in his head: from that the pool had flowed. He examined it as well as he could with anxious eyes. It had almost stopped bleeding. What was he to do? What could be done? There was but one thing! He drew the helpless form to the side of the way, and leaning it up against the earth-dyke, sat down on the road before it, and so managed to get it upon his back, and rise with it. If he could but get him home unseen, much scandal might be forestalled!

On the level road he did very well; but, strong as he was, he did not find it an easy task to climb with such a burden the steep approach to the castle. He had little breath left when at last he reached the platform from which rose the towering bulk.

He carried him straight to the housekeeper's room. It was not yet more than half-past ten; and though the servants were mostly in bed, mistress Brookes was still moving about. He laid his burden on her sofa, and hastened to find her.

Like a sensible woman she kept her horror and dismay to herself. She got some brandy, and between them they managed to make him swallow a little. He began to recover. They bathed his wound, and did for it what they could with scissors and plaster, then carried him to his own room, and got him to bed. Donal sat down by him, and staid. His patient was restless and wandering all the night, but towards morning fell into a sound sleep, and was still asleep when the housekeeper came to relieve him.

As soon as Mrs. Brookes left Donal with lord Forgue, she went to Eppy's room, and found her in bed, pretending to be asleep. She left her undisturbed, thinking to come easier at the truth if she took her unprepared to lie. It came out afterwards that she was not so heartless as she seemed. She found lord Forgue waiting her upon the road, and almost immediately Kennedy came up to them. Forgue told her to run home at once: he would soon settle matters with the fellow. She went off like a hare, and till she was out of sight the men stood looking at each other. Kennedy was a powerful man, and Forgue but a stripling; the latter trusted, however, to his skill, and did not fear his adversary. He did not know what he was.

He seemed now in no danger, and his attendants agreed to be silent till he recovered. It was given out that he was keeping his room for a few days, but that nothing very serious was the matter with him.

In the afternoon, Donal went to find Kennedy, loitered a while about the village, and made several inquiries after him; but no one had seen him.

Forgue recovered as rapidly as could have been expected. Davie was troubled that he might not go and see him, but he would have been full of question, remark, and speculation! For what he had himself to do in the matter, Donal was but waiting till he should be strong enough to be taken to task.

CHAPTER XXVI.

CONFRONTMENT.

At length one evening Donal knocked at the door of Forgue's room, and went in. He was seated in an easy chair before a blazing fire, looking comfortable, and showing in his pale face no sign of a disturbed conscience.

"My lord," said Donal, "you will hardly be surprised to find I have something to talk to you about!"

His lordship was so much surprised that he made him no answer —only looked in his face. Donal went on:—

"I want to speak to you about Eppy Comin," he said.

Forgue's face flamed up. The devil of pride, and the devil of fear, and the devil of shame, all rushed to the outworks to defend the worthless self. But his temper did not at once break bounds.

"Allow me to remind you, Mr. Grant," he said, "that, although I have availed myself of your help, I am not your pupil, and you have no authority over me."

"The reminder is unnecessary, my lord," answered Donal. "I am not your tutor, but I am the friend of the Comins, and therefore of Eppy."

His lordship drew himself up yet more erect in his chair, and a sneer came over his handsome countenance. But Donal did not wait for him to speak.

"Don't imagine me, my lord," he said, "presuming on the fact that I had the good fortune to carry you home: that I should have done for the stable-boy in similar plight. But as I interfered for you then, I have to interfere for Eppie now."

"Damn your insolence! Do you think because you are going to be a parson, you may make a congregation of me!"

"I have not the slightest intention of being a parson," returned

Donal quietly, "but I do hope to be an honest man, and your lordship is in great danger of ceasing to be one!"

"Get out of my room," cried Forgue.

Donal took a seat opposite him.

"If you do not, I will!" said the young lord, and rose.

But ere he reached the door, Donal was standing with his back against it. He locked it, and took out the key. The youth glared at him, unable to speak for fury, then turned, caught up a chair, and rushed at him. One twist of Donal's ploughman-hand wrenched it from him. He threw it over his head upon the bed, and stood motionless and silent, waiting till his rage should subside. In a few moments his eye began to quail, and he went back to his seat.

"Now, my lord," said Donal, following his example and sitting down, "will you hear me?"

"I'll be damned if I do!" he answered, flaring up again at the first sound of Donal's voice.

"I'm afraid you'll be damned if you don't," returned Donal.

His lordship took the undignified expedient of thrusting his fingers in his ears. Donal sat quiet until he removed them. But the moment he began to speak he thrust them in again. Donal rose, and seizing one of his hands by the wrist, said,

"Be careful, my lord; if you drive me to extremity, I will speak so that the house shall hear me; if that will not do, I go straight to your father."

"You are a spy and a sneak!"

"A man who behaves like you, should have no terms held with him."

The youth broke out in a fresh passion. Donal sat waiting till the futile outburst should be over. It was presently exhausted, the rage seeming to go out for want of fuel. Nor did he again stop his ears against the truth he saw he was doomed to hear.

"I am come," said Donal, "to ask your lordship whether the course you are pursuing is not a dishonourable one."

"I know what I am about."

"So much the worse—but I doubt it. For your mother's sake, if for no other, you should scorn to behave to a woman as you are doing now."

"What do you please to imagine I am doing now?"

"There is no imagination in this—that you are behaving to Eppy as no man ought except he meant to marry her."

"How do you know I do not mean to marry her?"

"Do you mean to marry her, my lord?"

"What right have you to ask?"

"At least I live under the same roof with you both."

"What if she knows I do not intend to marry her?"

"My duty is equally plain: I am the friend of her only relatives. If I did not do my best for the poor girl, I dared not look my Master in the face!—Where is your honour, my lord?"

"I never told her I would marry her."

"I never supposed you had."

"Well, what then?"

"I repeat, such attentions as yours must naturally be supposed by any innocent girl to mean marriage."

"Bah! she is not such a fool!"

"I fear she is fool enough not to know to what they must then point!"

"They point to nothing."

"Then you take advantage of her innocence to amuse yourself with her."

"What if she be not quite so innocent as you would have her."

"My lord, you are a scoundrel."

For one moment Forgue seemed to wrestle with an all but uncontrollable fury; the next he laughed—but it was not a nice laugh.

"Come now," he said, "I'm glad I've put *you* in a rage! I've got over mine. I'll tell you the whole truth: there is nothing between me and the girl—nothing whatever, I give you my word, except an innocent flirtation. Ask herself."

"My lord," said Donal, "I believe what you mean me to understand. I thought nothing worse of it myself."

"Then why the devil kick up such an infernal shindy about it?"

"For these reasons, my lord:——"

"Oh, come! don't be long-winded."

"You must hear me."

"Go on."

"I will suppose she does not imagine you mean to marry her."

"She can't!"

"Why not?"

"She's not a fool, and she can't imagine me such an idiot!"

"But may she not suppose you love her?"

He tried to laugh.

"You have never told her so?—never said or done anything to make her think so?"

"Oh, well! she may think so—after a sort of a fashion!"

"Would she speak to you again if she heard you talking so of the love you give her?"

"You know as well as I do the word has many meanings?"

"And which is she likely to take? That which is confessedly false and worth nothing?"

"She may take which she pleases, and drop it when she pleases."

"But now, does she not take your words of love for more than they are worth?"

"She says I will soon forget her."

"Will any saying keep her from being so in love with you as to reap misery? You don't know what the consequences may be! Her love wakened by yours, may be infinitely stronger than yours!"

"Oh, women don't now-a-days die for love!" said his lordship, feeling a little flattered.

"It would be well for some of them if they did! they never get over it. She mayn't die, true! but she may live to hate the man that led her to think he loved her, and taught her to believe in nobody. Her whole life may be darkened because you would amuse yourself."

"She has her share of the amusement, and I have my share, by Jove, of the danger! She's a very pretty, clever, engaging girl—though she is but a housemaid!" said Forgue, as if uttering a sentiment of quite communistic liberality.

"What you say shows the more danger to her! If you admire her so much you must have behaved to her so much the more like a genuine lover? But any suffering the affair may have caused you, will hardly, I fear, persuade you to the only honourable escape!"

"By Jupiter!" cried Forgue. "Would you have me marry the girl? That's coming it rather strong with your friendship for the cobbler!"

"No, my lord; if things are as you represent, I have no such desire. What I want is to put a stop to the whole affair. Every man has to be his brother's keeper; and if our western notions concerning women be true, a man is yet more bound to be his sister's keeper. He who does not recognize this, be he earl or prince, is viler than the murderous prowler after a battle. For a man to say 'she can take care of herself,' is to speak out of essential hell. The beauty of love is, that it does not take care of itself, but of the person loved. To approach a girl in any other fashion is a mean scoundrelly thing. I am glad it has already brought on you some of the chastisement it deserves."

His lordship started to his feet in a fresh access of rage.

"You dare say that to my face!"

"Assuredly, my lord. The fact stands just so."

"I gave the fellow as good as he gave me!"

"That is nothing to the point—though from the state I found you in, it is hard to imagine. Pardon me, I do not believe you behaved like what *you* call a coward."

Lord Forgue was almost crying with rage.

"I have not done with him yet!" he stammered. "If I only knew who the rascal is! If I don't pay him out, may——"

"Stop, stop, my lord. All that is mere waste! I know who the man is, but I will not tell you. He gave you no more than you deserved, and I will do nothing to get him punished for it."

"You are art and part with him!"

"I neither knew of his intent, saw him do it, nor have any proof against him."

"You will not tell me his name?"

"No."

"I will find it out, and kill him."

"He threatens to kill you. I will do what I can to prevent either."

"I will kill him," repeated Forgue through his clenched teeth.

"And I will do my best to have you hanged for it," said Donal.

"Leave the room, you insolent bumpkin."

"When you have given me your word that you will never again speak to Eppy Comin."

"I'll be damned first."

"She will be sent away."

"Where I shall see her the easier."

His lordship said this more from perversity than intent, for he had begun to wish himself clear of the affair—only how was he to give in to this unbearable clown!

"I will give you till to-morrow to think of it," said Donal, and opened the door.

His lordship made him no reply, but cast after him a look of uncertain anger. Donal, turning his head as he shut the door, saw it.

"I trust," he said, "you will one day be glad I spoke to you plainly."

"Oh, go along with your preaching!" cried Forgue, more testily than wrathfully; and Donal went.

In the meantime Eppy had been soundly taken to task by

Mrs. Brookes, and told that if once again she spoke a word to lord Forgue, she should that very day have her dismissal. The housekeeper thought she had at least succeeded in impressing upon her that she was in danger of losing her situation in a way that must seriously affect her character. She assured Donal that she would not let the foolish girl out of her sight; and thereupon Donal thought it better to give lord Forgue a day to make up his mind.

On the second morning he came to the schoolroom when lessons were over, and said frankly,

"I've made a fool of myself, Mr. Grant! Make what excuse for me you can. I am sorry. Believe me, I meant no harm. I have made up my mind that all shall be over between us."

"Promise me you will not once speak to her again."

"I don't like to do that: it might happen to be awkward. But I promise to do my best to avoid her."

Donald was not quite satisfied, but thought it best to leave the thing so. The youth seemed entirely in earnest.

For a time he remained in doubt whether he should mention the thing to Eppy's grandparents. He reflected that their influence with her did not seem very great, and if she were vexed by anything they said, it might destroy what little they had. Then it would make them unhappy, and he could not bear to think of it. He made up his mind that he would not mention it, but, in the hope she would now change her way, leave the past to be forgotten. He had no sooner thus resolved, however, than he grew uncomfortable, and was unsatisfied with the decision. All would not be right between his friend and him! Andrew Comin would have something against him! He could no longer meet him as before, for he would be hiding something from him, and he would have a right to reproach him! Then his inward eyes grew clear. He said to himself, "What a man has a right to know, another has no right to conceal from him. If sorrow belong to him, I have as little right to keep that from him as joy. His sorrows and his joys are part of a man's inheritance. My wisdom to take care of this man!—his own is immeasurably before mine! The whole matter concerns him: I will let him know at once!"

The same night he went to see him. His wife was out, and Donal was glad of it. He told him all that had taken place.

He listened in silence, his eyes fixed on him, his work on his lap, his hand with the awl hanging by his side. When he heard how Eppy had tricked Donal that night, leaving him to watch in vain, tears gathered in his old eyes. He wiped them away with the backs of his horny hands, and there came no more. Donal

told him he had first thought he would say nothing to him about it all, he was so loath to trouble them, but neither his heart nor his conscience would let him be silent.

"Ye did richt to tell me," said Andrew, after a pause. "It's true we haena that muckle weicht wi' her, for it seems a law o' natur 'at the yoong 's no to be hauden doon by the experrience o' the auld—which *can* be experrience only to themsel's; but whan we pray to God, it puts it mair in his pooer to mak use o' 's for the carryin' oot o' the thing we pray for. It's no aye by words he gies us to say; wi' some fowk words gang for unco little; it may be whiles by a luik o' whilk ye ken naething, or it may be by a motion o' yer han', or a turn o' yer heid. Wha kens but ye may haud a divine pooer ower the hert ye hae 'maist gi'en up the houp o' ever winnin' at! Ye hae h'ard o' the convic' broucht to sorrow by seein' a bit o' the same mattin' he had been used to see i' the aisle o' the kirk his mither tuik him til! That was a stroke o' God's magic! There's nae kennin' what God can do, nor yet what best o' rizzons he has for no doin' 't sooner! Whan we think he's lattin' the time gang, an' doin' naething, he may be jist doin' a' thing! No 'at I ever think like that noo; lat him do 'at he likes, what he does I'm sure o'. I'm o' his min' whether I ken his min' or no.—Eh, my lassie! my lassie! I could better win ower a hantle nor her giein' you the slip that gait, sir. It was sae dooble o' her! It's naething wrang in itsel' 'at a yoong lass sud be taen wi' the attentions o' a bonny lad like lord Forgue! That's na agen the natur 'at God made! But to preten' an' tak in!—to be cunnin' an' sly! that's evil. An' syne for the ither lad—eh, I doobt that's warst o' 'a! Only I kenna hoo far she had committit hersel' wi' him, for she was never open-hertit. Eh, sir! it's a fine thing to hae nae sacrets but sic as lie 'atween yersel' an' yer macker! I can but pray the Father o' a' to haud his e'e upon her, an' his airms aboot her, an' keep aff the hardenin' o' the hert 'at despises coonsel! I'm sair doobtin' we canna do muckle mair for her! She maun tak her ain gait, for we canna put a collar roon' her neck, an' lead her aboot whaurever we gang. She maun win her ain breid; an' gien she didna that, she wad be but the mair ta'en up wi' sic nonsense as the likes o' lord Forgue 's aye ready to say til ony bonny lass. An' I varily believe she's safer there wi' you an' the hoosekeeper nor whaur he could win at her easier, an' whaur they wud be readier to tak her character fra her upo' less offence, an' sen' her aboot her business. Fowk 's unco' jealous about their hoose 'at wad trouble themsel's little aboot a lass! Sae lang as it's no upo' *their* premises, she may do as she likes for them! Doory an' me, we'll jist lay oor cares i' the fine

sicht an' 'afore the compassionate hert o' the Maister, an' see what he can do for 's! Sic things aiven we can lea' to him! I houp there'll be nae mair bludeshed! He's a fine lad, Steenie Kennedy —come o' a fine stock! His father was a God-fearin' man—some dour by natur, but wi' an unco clearin' up throuw grace. I wud wullin'ly hae seen oor Eppy his wife; he's an honest lad! I'm sorry he gied place to wrath, but he may hae repentit by the noo, an' troth, I canna blame him muckle at his time o' life! It's no as gien you or me did it, ye ken, sir!"

The chosen agonize after the light; stretch out their hands to God; stir up themselves to lay hold upon God! These are they who gather grace, as the mountain-tops the snow, to send down rivers of water to their fellows. The rest are the many called, of whom not a few have to be compelled. Alas for the one cast out!

As he was going home in the dark of a clouded moonlight, just as he reached the place where he found lord Forgue, Donal caught sight of the vague figure of a man apparently on the watch, and put himself a little on his guard as he went on. It was Kennedy. He came up to him in a hesitating way.

"Stephen," said Donal, for he seemed to wait for him to speak first, "you may thank God you are not now in hiding."

"I wad never hide, sir. Gien I had killed the man, I wad hae hauden my face til't. But it was a foolish thing to do, for it'll only gar the lass think the mair o' him: they aye side wi' the ane they tak to be ill-used!"

"I thought you said you would in any case have no more to do with her!" said Donal.

Kennedy was silent for a moment.

"A body may tear at their hert," he muttered, "but gien it winna come, what's the guid o' sweirin' oot it maun!"

"Well," returned Donal, "it may be some comfort to you to know that, for the present at least, and I hope for altogether, the thing is put a stop to. The housekeeper at the castle knows all about it, and she and I will do our best. Her grandparents know too. Eppie herself and lord Forgue have both of them promised there shall be no more of it. And I do believe, Kennedy, there has been nothing more than great silliness on either side. I hope you will not forget yourself again. You gave me a promise and broke it!"

"No i' the letter, sir—only i' the speerit!" rejoined Kennedy: "I gaedna near the castel!"

"'*Only* in the spirit!' did you say, Stephen? What matters the word but for the spirit? The Bible itself lets the word go

any time for the spirit! Would it have been a breach of your promise if you had gone to the castle on some service to the man you almost murdered? If ever you lay your hand on the lad again, I'll do my best to give you over to justice. But keep quiet, and I'll do all I can for you."

Kennedy promised to govern himself, and they parted friends.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE SOUL OF THE OLD GARDEN.

THE days went on and on, and still Donal saw nothing, or next to nothing of the earl. Thrice he met him on the way to the walled garden in which he was wont to take his unfrequent exercise; on one of these occasions his lordship spoke to him courteously, the next scarcely noticed him, the third passed him without recognition. Donal, who with equal mind took everything as it came, troubled himself not at all about the matter. He was doing his work as well as he knew how, and that was enough.

Now also he saw scarcely anything of lord Forgue either; he no longer sought his superior scholarship. Lady Arctura he saw generally once a week at the religion-lesson; of Miss Carmichael happily nothing at all. But as he grew more familiar with the countenance of lady Arctura, it pained him more and more to see it so sad, so far from peaceful. What might be the cause of it?

Most well-meaning young women are in general tolerably happy—partly perhaps because they have few or no aspirations, not troubling themselves about what alone is the end of thought—and partly perhaps because they despise the sadness ever ready to assail them, as something unworthy. But if condemned to the round of a tormenting theological mill, and at the same time consumed with strenuous endeavour to order thoughts and feelings according to supposed requirements of the gospel, with little to employ them and no companions to make them forget themselves, such would be at once more sad and more worthy. The narrow ways trodden of men are miserable; they have high walls on each side, and but an occasional glimpse of the sky above; and in such paths lady Arctura was trying to walk. The true way, though narrow, is not unlovely: most footpaths are lovelier than high roads. It may be full of toil, but it cannot be miserable. It has not walls, but fields and forests and gardens around it, and limitless sky overhead. It has its sorrows, but many of them lie only on its

borders, and they that leave the path gather them. Lady Arctura was devouring her soul in silence, with such effectual help thereto as the self-sufficient friend, who had never encountered a real difficulty in her life, plenteously gave her. Miss Carmichael dealt with her honestly according to her wisdom, but that wisdom was foolishness; she said what she thought right, but was wrong in what she counted right; nay, she did what she thought right—but no amount of doing wrong right can set the soul on the high table-land of freedom, or endow it with liberating help.

The autumn passed, and the winter was at hand—a terrible time to the old and ailing even in tracts nearer the sun—to the young and healthy a merry time even in the snows and bitter frosts of eastern Scotland. Davie looked chiefly to the skating, and in particular to the pleasure he was going to have in teaching Mr. Grant, who had never done any sliding except on the soles of his nailed shoes: when the time came, he acquired the art the more rapidly that he never minded what blunders he made in learning a thing. The dread of blundering is a great bar to success.

He visited the Comins often, and found continual comfort and help in their friendship. The letters he received from home, especially those of his friend sir Gibbie, who not unfrequently wrote also for Donal's father and mother, were a great nourishment to him.

As the cold and the nights grew, the water-level rose in Donal's well, and the poetry began to flow. When we have no summer without, we must supply it from within. Those must have comfort in themselves who are sent to help others. Up in his aerie, like an eagle above the low affairs of the earth, he led a keener life, breathed the breath of a more genuine existence than the rest of the house. No doubt the old cobbler, seated at his last over a mouldy shoe, breathed a yet higher air than Donal weaving his verse, or reading grand old Greek, in his tower; but Donal was on the same path, the only path with an infinite end—the divine destiny.

He had often thought of trying the old man with some of the best poetry he knew, desirous of knowing what receptivity he might have for it; but always when with him had hitherto forgot his proposed inquiry, and thought of it again only after he had left him: the original flow of the cobbler's life put the thought of testing it out of his mind.

One afternoon, when the last of the leaves had fallen, and the country was bare as the heart of an old man who has lived to himself, Donal, seated before a great fire of coal and boat-logs,

fell a thinking of the old garden, vanished with the summer, but living in the memory of its delight. All that was left of it at the foot of the hill was its corpse, but its soul was in the heaven of Donal's spirit, and there this night gathered to itself a new form. It grew and grew in him, till it filled with its thoughts the mind of the poet. He turned to his table, and began to write: with many emendations afterwards, the result was this:—

THE OLD GARDEN.

I.

I stood in an ancient garden
With high red walls around;
Over them gray and green lichens
In shadowy arabesque wound.

The topmost climbing blossoms
On fields kine-haunted looked out;
But within were shelter and shadow,
And daintiest odours about.

There were alleys and lurking arbours—
Deep glooms into which to dive;
The lawns were as soft as fleeces—
Of daisies I counted but five.

The sun-dial was so aged
It had gathered a thoughtful grace;
And the round-about of the shadow
Seemed to have furrowed its face.

The flowers were all of the oldest
That ever in garden sprung;
Red, and blood-red, and dark purple,
The rose-lamps flaming hung.

Along the borders fringéd
With broad thick edges of box,
Stood fox-gloves and gorgeous poppies,
And great-eyed hollyhocks.

There were junipers trimmed into castles,
And ash-trees bowed into tents;
For the garden, though ancient and pensive,
Still wore quaint ornaments.

It was all so stately fantastic,
Its old wind hardly would stir:
Young Spring, when she merrily entered,
Must feel it no place for her!

II.

I stood in the summer morning
Under a cavernous yew;
The sun was gently climbing,
And the scents rose after the dew.

I saw the wise old mansion,
Like a cow in the noonday-heat,
Stand in a pool of shadows
That rippled about its feet.

Its windows were oriel and latticed,
Lowly and wide and fair;
And its chimneys like clustered pillars
Stood up in the thin blue air.

White doves, like the thoughts of a lady,
Haunted it in and out;
With a train of green and blue comets,
The peacock went marching about.

The birds in the trees were singing
A song as old as the world,
Of love and green leaves and sunshine,
And winter folded and furled.

They sang that never was sadness
But it melted and passed away;
They sang that never was darkness
But in came the conquering day.

And I knew that a maiden somewhere,
In a sober sunlit gloom,
In a nimbus of shining garments,
An aureole of white-browed bloom,

Looked out on the garden dreamy,
And knew not that it was old;
Looked past the gray and the sombre,
And saw but the green and the gold.

III.

I stood in the gathering twilight,
In a gently blowing wind;
And the house looked half uneasy,
Like one that was left behind.

The roses had lost their redness,
And cold the grass had grown;
At roost were the pigeons and peacock,
And the dial was dead gray stone.

The world by the gathering twilight
In a gauzy dusk was clad;
It went in through my eyes to my spirit,
And made me a little sad.

Grew and gathered the twilight,
And filled my heart and brain;
The sadness grew more than sadness,
And turned to a gentle pain.

Browned and brooded the twilight,
And sank down through the calm,
Till it seemed for some human sorrows
There could not be any balm.

IV.

Then I knew that, up a staircase,
Which untrod will yet creak and shake,
Deep in a distant chamber,
A ghost was coming awake.

In the growing darkness growing—
Growing till her eyes appear,
Like spots of a deeper twilight,
But more transparent clear—

Thin as hot air up-trembling,
Thin as a sun-molten crape,
The deepening shadow of something
Taketh a certain shape;

A shape whose hands are uplifted
To throw back her blinding hair;
A shape whose bosom is heaving,
But draws not in the air.

And I know, by what time the moonlight
On her nest of shadows will sit,
Out on the dim lawn gliding
That shadow of shadows will flit.

V.

The moon is dreaming upward
From a sea of cloud and gleam;
She looks as if she had seen us
Never but in a dream.

Down that stair I know she is coming,
Bare-footed, lifting her train;
It creaks not—she hears it creaking,
For the sound is in her brain.

Out at the side-door she's coming,
With a timid glance right and left!
Her look is hopeless yet eager,
The look of a heart bereft.

Across the lawn she is flitting,
Her eddying robe in the wind!
Are her fair feet bending the grasses?
Her hair is half lifted behind!

VI.

Shall I stay to look on her nearer?
Would she start and vanish away?
No, no; she will never see me,
If I stand as near as I may!

It is not this wind she is feeling,
Not this cool grass below;
'Tis the wind and the grass of an evening
A hundred years ago.

She sees no roses darkling,
No stately hollyhocks dim;
She is only thinking and dreaming
Of the garden, the night, and him;

Of the unlit windows behind her,
Of the timeless dial-stone,
Of the trees, and the moon, and the shadows,
A hundred years agone.

'Tis a night for all ghostly lovers
To haunt the best-loved spot:
Is he come in his dreams to this garden?
I gaze, but I see him not.

VII.

I will not look on her nearer—
My heart would be torn in twain;
From mine eyes the garden would vanish
In the falling of their rain!

I will not look on a sorrow
That darkens into despair;
On the surge of a heart that cannot—
Yet cannot cease to bear!

My soul to hers would be calling—
She would hear no word it said;
If I cried aloud in the stillness,
She would never turn her head!

She is dreaming the sky above her,
She is dreaming the earth below:—
This night she lost her lover,
A hundred years ago.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

A PRESENCE YET NOT A PRESENCE.

THE twilight had fallen while he wrote, and the wind had risen. It was now blowing a gale. When he could no longer see, he rose to light his lamp, and looked out of the window. All was dusk around him. Above and below was nothing to be distinguished from the mass; nothing and something seemed in it to share an equal uncertainty. He heard the wind, but could not see the clouds that swept before it, for all was cloud overhead, and no change of light or feature showed the shifting of the measureless bulk. Gray stormy space was the whole idea of the creation. He was gazing into a void—was it not rather a condition of things inappreciable by his senses? A strange feeling came over him as of looking from a window in the wall of the visible into the region unknown, to man shapeless quite, therefore terrible, wherein wander the things all that have not yet found or form or sensible embodiment, so as to manifest themselves to eyes or ears or hands of mortals. As he gazed, the huge shapeless hulks of the ships of chaos, dimly awful suggestions of animals uncreate, yet vaguer motions of what was not, came heaving up, to vanish, even from the fancy, as they approached his window. Earth lay far below, invisible; only through the night came the moaning of the sea, as the wind drove it, in still enlarging waves, upon the flat shore, a level of doubtful grass and sand, three miles away. It seemed to his heart as if the moaning were the voice of the darkness, lamenting, like a repentant Satan or Judas, that it was not the light, could not hold the light, might not become as the light, but must that moment cease when the light began to enter it. Darkness and moaning was all that the earth contained! Would the souls of the mariners shipwrecked this night go forth into the ceaseless turmoil? or would they, leaving behind them the sense for storms, as for all things soft and sweet as well, enter only a vast silence, where was nothing to be aware of but each solitary self? Thoughts and theories many passed through Donal's mind as he sought to land the conceivable from the wandering bosom of the limitless; and he was just arriving at the conclusion, that, as all things seen must be after the fashion of the unseen whence they come, as the very genius of embodiment is likeness, therefore the soul of man must of course have natural relations with matter; but, on the other hand, as the spirit must

be the home and origin of all this moulding, assimilating, modelling energy, and the spirit only that is in harmonious oneness with its origin can fully exercise the deputed creative power, it can be only in proportion to the eternal life in them, that spirits are able to draw to themselves matter and clothe themselves in it, so entering into full relation with the world of storms and sunsets ;—he was, I say, just arriving at this hazarded conclusion, when he started out of his reverie, and was suddenly all ear to listen.—Again !—Yes ! it was the same sound that had sent him that first night wandering through the house in fruitless quest ! It came in two or three fitful chords that melted into each other like the colours in the lining of a shell, then ceased. He went to the door, opened it, and listened. A cold wind came rushing up the stair. He heard nothing. He stepped out on the stair, shut his door, and listened. It came again—a strange unearthly musical cry ! If ever disembodied sound went wandering in the wind, just such a sound must it be ! Knowing little of music save in the forms of tone and vowel-change and rhythm and rime, he felt as if he could have listened for ever to the wild wandering sweetness of its lamentation. Almost immediately it ceased—then once more came again, apparently from far off, dying away on the distant tops of the billowy air, out of whose wandering bosom it had first issued. It was as the wailing of a summer-wind caught and swept along in a tempest from the frozen north.

The moment he ceased to expect it any more, he began to think whether it must not have come from the house. He stole down the stair—to do what, he did not know. He could not go following an airy nothing all over the castle : of a great part of it he as yet knew nothing ! His constructive mind had yearned after a complete idea of the building, for it was almost a passion with him to fit the outsides and insides of things together ; but there were suites of rooms into which, except the earl and lady Arctura were to leave home, he could not hope to enter. It was little more than mechanically therefore that he went vaguely after the sound ; and ere he was half-way down the stair, he recognized the hopelessness of the pursuit. He went on, however, to the schoolroom, where tea was waiting him.

He had returned to his room, and was sitting again at work, now reading and meditating, when, in one of the lulls of the storm, he became aware of another sound—one most unusual to his ears, for he never required any attendance in his room—that of steps coming up the stair—heavy steps, not as of one on some ordinary errand. He waited listening. The steps came nearer and nearer, and stopped at his door. A hand fumbled about

upon it, found the latch, lifted it, and entered. To Donal's wonder—and dismay as well, it was the earl. His dismay arose from his appearance: he was deadly pale, and his eyes more like those of a corpse than a man among his living fellows. Donal started to his feet.

The apparition turned its head towards him; but in its look was no atom of recognition, no acknowledgment or even perception of his presence; the sound of his rising had had merely a half-mechanical influence upon its brain. It turned away immediately, and went on to the window. There it stood, much as Donal had stood a little while before—looking out, but with the attitude of one listening rather than one trying to see. There was indeed nothing but the blackness to be seen—and nothing to be heard but the roaring of the wind, with the roaring of the great billows rolled along in it. As it stood, the time to Donal seemed long: it was but about five minutes. Was the man out of his mind, or only a sleep-walker? How could he be asleep so early in the night?

As Donal stood doubting and wondering, once more came the musical cry out of the darkness—and immediately from the earl a response—a soft, low murmur, by degrees becoming audible, in the tone of one meditating aloud, but in a restrained ecstacy. From his words he seemed still to be hearkening the sounds aerial, though to Donal at least they came no more.

"Yet once again," he murmured, "once again ere I forsake the flesh, are my ears blest with that voice! It is the song of the eternal-woman! For me she sings!—Sing on, siren; my soul is a listening universe, and therein nought but thy voice!"

He paused, and began afresh:—

"It is the wind in the tree of life! Its leaves rustle in words of love. Under its shadow I shall lie, with her I loved—and killed! Ere that day come, she will have forgiven and forgotten, and all will be well!

"Hark the notes! Clear as a flute! Full and stringent as a violin! They are colours! They are flowers! They are alive! I can see them as they grow, as they blow! Those are primroses! Those are pimpernels! Those high, intense, burning tones—so soft, yet so certain—what are they? Jasmine?—No, that flower is not a note! It is a chord!—and what a chord! I mean, what a flower! I never saw that flower before—never on *this* earth! It must be a flower of the paradise whence comes the music! It is! It is! Do I not remember the night when I sailed in the great ship over the ocean of the stars, and scented the airs of heaven, and saw the pearly gates gleaming across myriads of

wavering miles!—saw, plain as I see them now, the flowers on the fields within! Ah, me! the dragon that guards the golden apples! See his crest—his crest and his emerald eyes! He comes floating up through the murky lake! It is Geryon!—come to bear me to the gyre below!"

He turned, and with a somewhat quickened step left the room, hastily shutting the door behind him, as if to keep back the creature of his vision.

Strong-hearted and strong-brained, Donal had yet stood absorbed as if he too were out of the body, and knew nothing more of this earth. There is something more terrible in a presence that is not a presence than in a vision of the bodiless; that is, a present ghost is not so terrible as an absent one, a present but deserted body. He stood a moment helpless, then pulled himself together and tried to think. What should he do? What *could* he do? What was required of him? Was anything required of him? Had he any right to do anything? Could anything be done that would not both be and cause a wrong? His first impulse was to follow: a man in such a condition was surely not to be left to go whither he would among the heights and depths of the castle, where he might break his neck any moment! Interference no doubt was dangerous, but he would follow him at least a little way! He heard the steps going down the stair, and made haste after them. But ere they could have reached the bottom, the sound of them ceased; and Donal knew the earl must have left the stair at a point from which he could not follow him.

CHAPTER XXIX.

EPPY AGAIN.

He would gladly have told his friend the cobbler all about the strange occurrence; but he did not feel sure it would be right to carry a report of the house where he held a position of trust; and what made him doubtful was, that first he doubted whether the cobbler would consider it right. But he went to see him the next day, in the desire to be near the only man to whom it was possible he might tell what he had seen.

The moment he entered the room, where the cobbler as usual sat at work by his wife, he saw that something was the matter. But they welcomed him with their usual cordiality, nor was it

many minutes before mistress Comin made him acquainted with the cause of their anxiety.

"We're jist a wee triblet, sir," she said, "aboot Eppy!"

"I am very sorry," said Donal, with a pang: he had thought things were going right with her. "What is the matter?"

"It's no sae easy to say!" returned the grandmother. "It may weel be only a fancy o' the auld fowk, but it seems to baith o' 's she has a w'y wi' her 'at disna come o' the richt. She'll be that meek as gien she thoucht naething at a' o' hersel', an' the next moment be angert at a word. She canna bide a syllable said 'at 's no correc' to the verra hair. It's as gien she dreidit waur 'ahint it, an' wud mairch straucht to the defence. I'm no makin' my meanin' that clear, I doobt; but ye'll ken 't for a' that!"

"I think I do," said Donal. "—*I* see nothing of her."

"I wudna mak a won'er o' that, sir! She may weel haud oot o' *your* gait, feelin' rebukit 'afore ane 'at kens a' aboot her gaein's on wi' my lord!"

"I don't know how I should see her, though!" returned Donal.

"Didna she sweep oot the schoolroom first whan ye gaed, sir?"

"When I think of it—yes."

"Does she still that same?"

"I do not know. Understanding at what hour in the morning the room will be ready for me, I do not go to it sooner."

"It's but the luik, an' the general cairriage o' the lassie!" said the old woman. "Gien we had onything to tak a haud o', we wad maybe think the less. True, she was aye some—what ye micht ca' a bit cheengeable in her w'ys; but she was aye, whan she had the chance, unco' willin' to gie her faither there or mysel' a spark o' glaidness like. It pleased her to be pleasin' i' the eyes o' the auld fowk, though they war but her ain. But noo we maunna say a word til her. We hae nae business to luik til her for naething! No 'at she's aye like that; but it comes sae aft 'at at last we daur hardly open oor moo's for the fear o' hoo she'll tak it. Only a' the time it's mair as gien she was flingin' something frae her, something she didna like an' wud fain be rid o', than 'at she cared sae verra muckle aboot onything we said no til her min'. She taks a haud o' the words, no doobt! but I canna help thinkin' 'at 'maist whatever we said, it wud be the same. Something to compleen o' 's never wantin' whan ye're ill-pleast a'ready!"

"It's no the duin' o' the richt, ye see," said the cobbler, "—I mean, that's no itsel' the en', but the richt humour o' the sowl towards a' things thoucht or felt or dune! That's richteousness, an'

oot o' that comes, o' the verra necessity o' natur', a' richt deeds o' whatever kin'. Whaur they comena furth, it's whaur the sowl, the thoucht o' the man 's no richt. Oor puir lassie shaws a' mainner o' sma' infirmities jist 'cause the humour o' her sowl 's no hermonious wi' the trowth, no hermonious in itsel', no at ane wi' the true thing—wi' the true man—wi' the true God. It may even be said it's a sma' thing 'at a man sud du wrang, sae lang as he's capable o' duin' wrang, an' lovesna the richt wi' hert an' sowl. But eh, it's no a sma' thing 'at he sud be capable!"

"Surely, Anerew," interposed his wife, holding up her hands in mild deprecation, "ye wudna lat the lassie du wrang gien ye could haud her richt?"

"No, I wudna," replied her husband, "—supposin' the haudin' o' her richt to fa' in wi' ony degree o' perception o' the richt on her pairt. But supposin' it was only the haudin' o' her frae ill by ootward constraint, leavin' her ready upo' the first opportunity to turn aside; whereas, gien she had dune wrang, she wud repent o' 't, an' see what a foul thing it was to gang again' the holy wull o' him 'at made an' dee'd for her—I lea' ye to jeedge for yersel' what ony man 'at luved God an' luved the lass an' luved the richt, wud chuise. We maun haud baith een open upo' the trowth, an' no blink sidewise upo' the warl' an' its richteousness wi' ane o' them. Wha wadna be Zacchay wi' the Lord in his hoose, an' the richteousness o' God himsel' growin' in his hert, raither nor the prood Pharisee wha kent nae ill he was duin', an' thoucht it a shame to speak to sic a man as Zacchay!"

The grandmother held her peace, thinking probably that so long as one kept respectable, there remained the more likelihood of a spiritual change.

"Is there anything you think I could do?" asked Donal. "I confess I'm afraid of meddling."

"I wudna hae *you* appear, sir," said Andrew, "in onything concernin' her. Ye're a yoong man yersel', an' fowk's herts as well as fowk's tongues are no to be lippent til. I hae seen fowk, 'cause they couldna believe a body duin' a thing frae a sma' modicum o' gude wull, set themsel's to invent what they ca'd a motive til accoont for't—something, that is, that wud hae prevailt wi' themsel's to gar them du't. Sic fowk canna un'erstan' a body duin' onything jist 'cause it was worth duin' in itsel'!"

"But maybe," said the old woman, returning to the practical, "as ye hae been pleased to say ye're on freen'ly terms wi' mistress Brookes, ye micht jist see gien she 's observed ony ten'ency to resumption o' the auld affair!"

Donal promised, and as soon as he reached the castle sought

an interview with the house keeper. She told him she had been particularly pleased of late with Eppy's attention to her work, and readiness to make herself useful. If she did look sometimes a little out of heart, they must remember, she said, that they had been young themselves once, and that it was not so easy to forget as to give up. But she would keep her eyes open!

CHAPTER XXX.

LORD MORVEN.

THE winter came at last in good earnest—first black frost, then white snow, then sleet and wind and rain; then snow again, which fell steady and calm, and lay thick. After that came hard frost, and brought plenty of skating, and to Davie the delight of teaching his master. Donal had many falls, but was soon, partly in virtue of those same falls, a very decent skater. Davie claimed all the merit of his successful training; and when his master did anything particularly well, would remark with pride, that he had taught him. But the good thing in it for Davie was, that he noted the immediate faith with which Donal did or tried to do what he told him: this reacted in opening his mind to the beauty and dignity of obedience, and went a long way towards revealing the low moral condition of the man who seeks freedom through refusal to act at the will of another. He who does so will come by degrees to have no will of his own, and act only from impulse—which may be the will of a devil. So Donal and Davie grew together into one heart of friendship. Donal never longed for his hours with Davie to pass, and Davie was never so happy as when with Donal. The one was gently leading the other into the paths of liberty. Nothing but the teaching of him who made the human soul can make that soul free, but it is in great measure through those who have already learned that he teaches; and Davie was an apt pupil, promising to need less of the discipline of failure and pain that he was strong to believe, and ready to obey.

But Donal was not all the day with Davie, and latterly had begun to feel a little anxious about the time the boy spent away from him—partly with his brother, partly with the people about the stable, and partly with his father, who evidently found the presence of his younger son less irksome to him than that of any other person, and saw more of him than of Forgue: the amount

of loneliness the earl could endure was amazing. But after what he had seen and heard, Donal was most anxious concerning his time with his father, only he felt it a delicate thing to ask him about it. At length, however, Davie himself opened up the matter.

"Mr. Grant," he said one day, "I wish you could hear the grand fairy-stories my papa tells!"

"I wish I might!" answered Donal.

"I will ask him to let you come and hear. I have told him you can make fairy-tales too; only he has quite another way of doing it;—and I must confess," added Davie a little pompously, "I do not follow him so easily as you.—Besides," he added, "I never can find anything in what you call the cupboard behind the curtain of the story. I wonder sometimes if his stories have any cupboard!—I will ask him to-day to let you come."

"I think that would hardly do," said Donal. "Your father likes to tell his boy fairy-tales, but he might not care to tell them to a man. You must remember, too, that though I have been in the house what *you* think a long time, your father has seen very little of me, and might feel me in the way: invalids do not generally enjoy the company of strangers. You had better not ask him."

"But I have often told him how good you are, Mr. Grant, and how you can't bear anything that is not right, and I am sure he must like you—I don't mean so well as I do, because you haven't to teach him anything, and nobody can love anybody so well as the one he teaches to be good."

"Still I think you had better leave it alone lest he should not like your asking him. I should be sorry to have you disappointed."

"I do not mind that so much as I used. If you do not tell me I am not to do it, I think I will venture."

Donal said no more. He did not feel at liberty, from his own feeling merely, to check the boy. The thing was not wrong, and something might be intended to come out of it! He shrank from the least ruling of events, believing man's only *call* to action is duty. So he left Davie to do as he pleased.

"Does your father often tell you a fairy-tale?" he asked.

"Not every day, sir."

"What time does he tell them?"

"Generally when I go to him after tea."

"Do you go any time you like?"

"Yes; but he does not always let me stay. Sometimes he talks about mamma, I think; but only coming into the fairy-tale.

—He *has* told me one in the middle of the day! I think he would if I woke him up in the night! But that would not do, for he has terrible headaches. Perhaps that is what sometimes makes his stories so terrible I have to beg him to stop!"

"And does he stop?"

"Well—no—I don't think he ever does.—When a story is once begun, I suppose it ought to be finished!

So the matter rested for the time. But about a week after, Donal received one morning through the butler an invitation to dine with the earl, and concluded it was due to Davie, whom he therefore expected to find with his father. He put on his best clothes, and followed Simmons up the grand staircase. The great rooms of the castle were on the first floor, but he passed the entrance to them, following his guide up and up to the second floor, where the earl had his own apartment. Here he was shown into a small room, richly furnished after a sombrely ornate fashion, the drapery and coverings much faded, worn even to shabbiness. It had been for a century or so the private sitting-room of the lady of the castle, but was now used by the earl, perhaps in memory of his wife. Here he received his sons, and now Donal, but never any whom business or politeness compelled him to see.

There was no one in the room when Donal entered, but after about ten minutes a door opened at the further end, and lord Morven appearing from his bedroom, shook hands with him with some faint show of kindness. Almost the same moment the butler entered from a third door, and said dinner waited. The earl walked on, and Donal followed. This room also was a small one. The meal was laid on a little round table. There were but two covers, and Simmons alone was in waiting.

While they ate and drank, which his lordship did sparingly, not a word was spoken. Donal would have found it embarrassing had he not been prepared for the peculiar. His lordship took no notice of his guest, leaving him to the care of the butler. He looked very white and worn—Donal thought a good deal worse than when he saw him first. His cheeks were more sunken, his hair more gray, and his eyes more weary—with a consuming fire in them that had no longer much fuel and was burning remnants. He stooped over his plate as if to hide the operation of eating, and drank his wine with a trembling hand. Every movement indicated indifference to both his food and his drink.

At length the more solid part of the meal was removed, and they were left alone, fruit upon the table, and two wine-decanters. From one of them the earl helped himself, then passed it to Donal, saying,

"You are very good to my little Davie, Mr. Grant! He is full of your kindness to him. There is nobody like you!"

"A little goes a long way with Davie, my lord," answered Donal.

"Then much must go a longer way!" said the earl.

There was nothing remarkable in the words, yet he spoke them with the difficulty a man accustomed to speak, and to weigh his words, might find in clothing a new thought to his satisfaction. The effort seemed to have tried him, and he took a sip of wine. This, however, he did after every briefest sentence he uttered: a sip only he took, nothing like a mouthful.

Donal told him that Davie, of all the boys he had known, was far the quickest, and that just because he was morally the most teachable.

"You greatly gratify me, Mr. Grant," said the earl. "I have long wished such a man as you for Davie. If only I had known you when Forgue was preparing for college!"

"I must have been at that time only at college myself, my lord!"

"True! true!"

"But for Davie, it is a privilege to teach him!"

"If only it might last a while!" returned the earl. "But of course you have the church in your eye!"

"My lord, I have not."

"What!" cried his lordship almost eagerly; "you intend giving your life to teaching?"

"My lord," returned Donal, "I never trouble myself about my life. Why should we burden the mule of the present with the camel-load of the future. I take what comes—what is sent me, that is."

"You are right, Mr. Grant! If I were in your position, I should think just as you do. But, alas, I have never had any choice!"

"Perhaps your lordship has not chosen to choose!" Donal was on the point of saying, but bethought himself in time not to hazard the remark.

"If I were a rich man, Mr. Grant," the earl continued, "I would secure your services for a time indefinite; but, as every one knows, not an acre of the property belongs to me, or goes with the title. Davie, dear boy, will have nothing but a thousand or two. The marriage I have in view for lord Forgue will arrange a future for him."

"I hope there will be some love in the marriage!" said Donal uneasily, with a vague thought of Eppy.

"I had no intention," returned his lordship with cold politeness, "of troubling you concerning lord Forgue!"

"I beg your pardon, my lord," said Donal.

"—Davie, poor boy—he is my anxiety!" resumed the earl, in his former condescendingly friendly, half sleepy tone. "What to do with him, I have not yet succeeded in determining. If the church of Scotland were episcopal now, we might put him into that: he would be an honour to it! But as it has no dignities to confer, it is not the place for one of his birth and social position. A few shabby hundreds a year, and the associations he would necessarily be thrown into!—However honourable the profession in itself!" he added, with a bow to Donal, apparently unable to get it out of his head that he had an embryo-clergyman before him.

"Davie is not quite a man yet," said Donal; "and by the time he begins to think of a profession, he will, I trust, be fit to make a choice: the boy has a great deal of common sense. If your lordship will pardon me, I cannot help thinking there is no need to trouble about him."

"It is very well for one in your position to think in that way, Mr. Grant! Men like you are free to choose; you may make your bread as you please. But men in our position are greatly limited in their choice; the paths open to them are few. Tradition oppresses us. We are slaves to the dead and buried. I could well wish I had been born in your humbler but in truth less contracted sphere. Certain rôles are not open to you, to be sure; but your life in the open air, following your sheep, and dreaming all things beautiful and grand in the world beyond you, is entrancing. It is the life to make a poet!"

"Or a king!" thought Donal. "But the earl would have made a discontented shepherd!"

The man who is not content where he is, would never have been content somewhere else, though he might have complained less.

"Take another glass of wine, Mr. Grant," said his lordship, filling his own from the other decanter. "Try this; I believe you will like it better."

"In truth, my lord," answered Donal, "I have drunk so little wine that I do not know one sort from another."

"You know whisky better, I daresay! Would you like some now? Touch the bell behind you."

"No, thank you, my lord; I know as little about whisky: my mother would never let us even taste it, and I have never tasted it."

"A new taste is a gain to the being."

"I suspect, however, a new appetite can only be a loss."

As he said this, Donal, half mechanically, filled a glass from the decanter his host had pushed towards him.

"I should like you, though," resumed his lordship, after a short pause, "to keep your eyes open to the fact that Davie must do something for himself. You would then be able to let me know by and by what you think him fit for!"

"I will with pleasure, my lord. Tastes may not be infallible guides to what is fit for us, but they may lead us to the knowledge of what we are fit for."

"Extremely well said!" returned the earl.

I do not think he understood in the least what Donal meant.

"Shall I try how he takes to trigonometry? He might care to learn land-surveying! Gentlemen now, not unfrequently, take charge of the properties of their more favoured relatives. There is Mr. Graeme, your own factor, my lord—a relative, I understand!"

"A distant one," answered his lordship with marked coldness, "—the degree of relationship hardly to be counted."

"In the lowlands, my lord, you do not care to count kin as we do in the highlands! My heart warms to the word kinsman."

"You have not found kinship so awkward as I, possibly!" said his lordship, with a watery smile. "The man in humble position may allow the claim of kin to any extent: he has nothing, therefore nothing can be taken from him! But the man who has would be the poorest of the clan if he gave to every needy relation."

"I never knew the man so poor," answered Donal, "that he had nothing to give. But the things of the poor are hardly to the purpose of the predatory relative."

"'Predatory relative!'—a good phrase!" said his lordship, with a sleepy laugh, though his eyes were wide open. His lips did not seem to care to move, yet he looked pleased. "To tell you the truth," he began again, "at one period of my history I gave and gave till I was tired of giving! Ingratitude was the sole return. At one period I had large possessions—larger than I like to think of now: if I had the tenth part of what I have given away, I should not be uneasy concerning Davie."

"There is no fear of Davie, my lord, so long as he is brought up with the idea that he must work for his bread."

His lordship made no answer, and his look reminded Donal of that he wore when he came to his chamber. A moment, and he rose and began to pace the room. An indescribable suggestion

of an invisible yet luminous cloud hovered about his forehead and eyes—which latter, if not fixed on very vacancy, seemed to have got somewhere near it. At the fourth or fifth turn he opened the door by which he had entered, continuing a remark he had begun to Donal—of which, although he heard every word and seemed on the point of understanding something, he had not caught the sense when his lordship disappeared, still talking. Donal thought it therefore his part to follow him, and found himself in his lordship's bedroom. But out of this his lordship had already gone, through an opposite door, and Donal still following entered an old picture-gallery, of which he had heard Davie speak, but which the earl kept private for his exercise indoors. It was a long, narrow place, hardly more than a wide corridor, and appeared nowhere to afford distance enough for seeing a picture. But Donal could ill judge, for the sole light in the place came from the fires and candles in the rooms whose doors they had left open behind them, with just a faint glimmer from the vapour-buried moon, sufficing to show the outline of window after window, and revealing something of the great length of the gallery.

By the time Donal overtook the earl, he was some distance down, holding straight on into the long dusk, and still talking.

"This is my favourite promenade," he said, as if brought to himself by the sound of Donal's overtaking steps. "After dinner always, Mr. Grant, wet weather or dry, still or stormy, I walk here. What do I care for the weather! It will be time when I am old to consult the barometer!"

Donal wondered a little: there seemed no great hardihood in the worst of weather to go pacing a picture-gallery, where the fiercest storm that ever blew could send in only little threads of air through the chinks of windows and doors!

"Yes," his lordship went on, "I taught myself hardship in my boyhood, and I reap the fruits of it in my prime!—Come up here: I will show you a prospect unequalled."

He stopped in front of a large picture, and began to talk as if expatiating on the points of a landscape outspread before him. His remarks belonged to something magnificent; but whether they were applicable to the picture Donal could not tell; there was light enough only to give a faint gleam to its gilded frame.

"Reach beyond reach!" said his lordship; "endless! infinite! How would not poor Maldon, with his ever fresh ambition after the unattainable, have gloated on such a scene! In Nature alone you front success! She does what she means! She alone does what she means!"

"If," said Donal, more for the sake of confirming the earl's

impression that he had a listener, than from any idea that he would listen—"if you mean the object of Nature is to present us with perfection, I cannot allow she does what she intends: you rarely see her produce anything she would herself call perfect. But if her object be to make us behold perfection with the inner eye, this object she certainly does gain, and that just by stopping short of——"

He did not finish the sentence. A sudden change was upon him, absorbing him so that he did not even try to account for it; something seemed to give way in his head—as if a bubble burst in his brain; and from that moment whatever the earl said, and whatever arose in his own mind, seemed to have outward existence as well. He heard and knew the voice of his host, but seemed also in some inexplicable way, which at the time occasioned him no surprise, to see the things which had their origin in the brain of the earl. Whether he went in very deed out with him into the night, he did not know—he felt as if he had gone, and thought he had not—but when he woke the next morning in his bed at the top of the tower, which he had no recollection of climbing, he was as weary as if he had been walking the night through.

CHAPTER XXXI.

BEWILDERMENT.

His first thought was of a long and delightful journey he had made on horseback with the earl—through scenes of entrancing interest and variety,—with the present result of a strange weariness, almost misery. What had befallen him? Was the thing a fact or a fancy? If a fancy, how was he so weary? If a fact, how could it have been? Had he in any way been the earl's companion through such a long night as it seemed? Could they have visited all the places whose remembrance lingered in his brain? He was so confused, so bewildered, so haunted with a shadowy uneasiness almost like remorse, that he even dreaded the discovery of the cause of it all. Might a man so lose hold of himself as to be no more certain he had ever possessed or could ever possess himself again?

He bethought himself at last that he might perhaps have taken more wine than his head could stand. Yet he remembered leaving his glass unemptied to follow the earl; and it was some

time after that before the change came! *Could* it have been drunkenness? Had it been slowly coming without his knowing it? He could hardly believe it? But whatever it was, it had left him unhappy, almost ashamed. What would the earl think of him? He must have concluded him unfit any longer to keep charge of his son! For his own part he did not feel he was to blame, but rather that an accident had befallen him. Whence then this sense of something akin to shame? Why should he be ashamed of anything coming upon him from without? Of that shame he had to be ashamed, as of a lack of faith in God! Would God leave his creature who trusted in him at the mercy of a chance—of a glass of wine taken in ignorance? *There* was a thing to be ashamed of, and with good cause!

He got up, found to his dismay that it was almost ten o'clock—his hour for rising in winter being six—dressed in haste, and went down, wondering that Davie had not come to see after him.

In the schoolroom he found him waiting for him. The boy sprang up, and darted to meet him.

"I hope you are better, Mr. Grant!" he said. "I am so glad you are able to be down!"

"I am quite well," answered Donal. "I can't think what made me sleep so long? Why didn't you come and wake me, Davie, my boy?"

"Because Simmons told me you were ill, and I must not disturb you if you were ever so late in coming down."

"I hardly deserve any breakfast!" said Donal, turning to the table; "but if you will stand by me, and read while I take my coffee, we shall save a little time so."

"Yes, sir.—But your coffee must be quite cold! I will ring."

"No, no; I must not waste any more time. A man who cannot drink cold coffee ought to come down while it is hot."

"Forgue won't drink cold coffee!" said Davie: "I don't see why you should!"

"Because I prefer to do with my coffee as I please; I will not have hot coffee for my master. I won't have it anything to me what humour the coffee may be in. I will be Donal Grant, whether the coffee be cold or hot. A bit of practical philosophy for you, Davie!"

"I think I understand you, sir: you would not have a man make a fuss about a trifle."

"Not about a real trifle. The co-relative of a trifle, Davie, is a smile. But I would take heed whether the thing that is called a trifle be really a trifle. Besides, there may be a point in a trifle that is the egg of an *ought*. It is a trifle whether this or that is

nice; it is a point that I should not care. With us highlanders it is a point of breeding not to mind what sort of dinner we have, but to eat as heartily of bread and cheese as of roast beef. At least so my father and mother used to teach me, though I fear *that* refinement of good manners is going out of fashion even with highlanders."

"It *is* good manners!" rejoined Davie with decision, "—and more than good manners! I should count it grand not to care what kind of dinner I had. But I am afraid it is more than I shall ever come to!"

"You will never come to it by trying because you think it grand. Only mind, I did not say we were not to enjoy our roast beef more than our bread and cheese; that would be not to discriminate, where there *is* a difference. If bread and cheese were just as good to us as roast beef, there would be no victory in our contentment."

"I see!" said Davie.—"Wouldn't it be well," he asked, after a moment's pause, "to put one's self in training, Mr. Grant, to do without things—or at least to be able to do without them?"

"It is much better to do the lessons set you by one who knows how to teach, than to pick lessons for yourself out of your books. Davie, I have not that confidence in myself to think I should be a good teacher of myself."

"But you are a good teacher of me, sir!"

"I try—but then I'm set to teach you, and I am not set to teach myself: I am only set to make myself do what I am taught. When you are my teacher, Davie, I try—don't I—to do everything you tell me?"

"Yes, indeed, sir!"

"But I am not set to obey myself!"

"No, nor anyone else, sir! You do not need to obey anyone, or have anyone teach you, sir!"

"Oh, don't I, Davie! On the contrary, I could not get on for one solitary moment without somebody to teach me. Look you here, Davie: I have so many lessons given me, that I have no time or need to add to them any of my own. If you were to ask the cook to let you have a cold dinner, you would perhaps eat it with pride, and take credit for what your hunger yet made quite agreeable to you. But the boy who does not grumble when he is told not to go out because it is raining and he has a cold, will not perhaps grumble either should he happen to find his dinner not at all nice."

Davie hung his head. It had been a very small grumble, but there are no sins for which there is less reason or less excuse than small ones: in no sense are they worth committing. And we

grown people commit many more such than little children, and have our reward in childishness instead of childlikeness.

"It is so easy," continued Donal, "to do the thing we ordain ourselves, for in holding to it we make ourselves out fine fellows!—and that is such a mean kind of thing! Then when another who has the right, lays a thing upon us, we grumble—though it be the truest and kindest thing, and the most reasonable and needful for us—even for our dignity—for our being worth anything! Depend upon it, Davie, to do what we are told is a far grander thing than to lay the severest rules upon ourselves—ay, and to stick to them, too!"

"But might there not be something good for us to do that we were not told of?"

"Whoever does the thing he is told to do—the thing, that is, that has a plain *ought* in it, will become satisfied that there is one who will not forget to tell him what must be done as soon as he is fit to do it."

The conversation lasted only while Donal ate his breakfast, with the little fellow standing beside him; it was soon over, but not soon to be forgotten. For the readiness of the boy to do what his master told him, was beautiful—and a great help and comfort, sometimes a rousing rebuke to his master, whose thoughts would yet occasionally tumble into one of the pitfalls of sorrow.

"What!" he would say to himself, "am I so believed in by this child, that he goes at once to do my words, and shall I for a moment doubt the heart of the Father, or his power or will to set right whatever may have seemed to go wrong with his child!—Go on, Davie! You are a good boy; I will be a better man!"

But naturally, as soon as lessons were over, he fell again to thinking what could have befallen him the night before. At what point did the aberration begin? The earl must have taken notice of it, for surely Simmons had not given Davie those injunctions of himself—except indeed he had exposed his condition even to him! If the earl had spoken to Simmons, kindness seemed intended him; but it might have been merely care over the boy! Anyhow, what was to be done?

He did not ponder the matter long. With that directness which was one of the most marked features of his nature, he resolved at once to request an interview with the earl, and make his apologies. He sought Simmons, therefore, and found him in the pantry rubbing up the forks and spoons.

"Ah, Mr. Grant," he said, before Donal could speak, "I was just coming to you with a message from his lordship! He wants to see you."

"And I came to you," replied Donal, "to say I wanted to see his lordship!"

"That's well fitted, then, sir!" returned Simmons. "I will go and see when. His lordship is not up, nor likely to be for some hours yet; he is in one of his low fits this morning. He told me *you* were not quite yourself last night."

As he spoke his red nose seemed to examine Donal's face with a kindly, but not altogether sympathetic scrutiny.

"The fact is, Simmons," answered Donal, "not being used to wine, I fear I drank more of his lordship's than was good for me."

"His lordship's wine," murmured Simmons, and there checked himself. "—How much did you drink, sir—if I may make so bold?"

"I had one glass during dinner, and more than one, but not nearly two, after."

"Pooh! pooh, sir! That could never hurt a strong man like you! You ought to know better than that! Look at me!"

But he did not go on with his illustration.

"Tut!" he resumed, "that make you sleep till ten o'clock!—If you will kindly wait in the hall, or in the schoolroom, I will bring you his lordship's orders."

So saying while he washed his hands and took off his white apron, Simmons departed on his errand to his master. Donal went to the foot of the grand staircase, and there waited.

As he stood he heard a light step above him, and involuntarily glancing up, saw the light shape of lady Arctura come round the curve of the spiral stair, descending rather slowly and very softly, as if her feet were thinking. She checked herself for an infinitesimal moment, then moved on again. Donal stood with bended head as she passed. If she acknowledged his obeisance it was with the slightest return, but she lifted her eyes to his face with a look that seemed to have in it a strange wistful trouble—not very marked, yet notable. She passed on and vanished, leaving that look a lingering presence in Donal's thought. What was it? Was it anything? What could it mean? Had he really seen it? Was it there, or had he only imagined it?

Simmons kept him waiting a good while. He had found his lordship getting up, and had had to stay to help him dress. At length he came, excusing himself that his lordship's temper at such times—that was, in his dumpy fits—was not of the evenest, and required a gentle hand. But his lordship would see him—and could Mr. Grant find the way himself, for his old bones ached with running up and down those endlesss stone stens? Donal answered he knew the way, and sprang up the stair

But his mind was more occupied with the coming interview than with the way to it, which caused him to take a wrong turn after leaving the stair: he had a good gift in space-relations, but instinct was here not so keen as on a hill-side. The consequence was that he found himself in the picture-gallery.

A strange feeling of pain, as at the presence of a condition he did not wish to encourage, awoke in him at the discovery. He walked along, however, thus taking, he thought, the readiest way to his lordship's apartment: either he would find him in his bedroom, or could go through that to his sitting-room! He glanced at the pictures he passed, and seemed, strange to say, though, so far as he knew, he had never been in the place except in the dark, to recognize some of them as belonging to the stuff of the dream in which he had been wandering through the night—only that was a glowing and gorgeous dream, whereas the pictures were even commonplace! Here was something to be meditated upon—but for the present postponed! His lordship was expecting him!

Arrived, as he thought, at the door of the earl's bedroom, he knocked, and receiving no answer, opened it, and found himself in a narrow passage. Nearly opposite was another door, partly open, and hearing a movement within, he ventured to knock there. A voice he knew at once to be lady Arctura's, invited him to enter. It was an old, lovely, gloomy little room, in which sat the lady writing. It had but one low lattice-window, to the west, but a fire blazed cheerfully in the old-fashioned grate. She looked up, nor showed more surprise than if he had been a servant she had rung for.

"I beg your pardon, my lady," he said: "my lord wished to see me, but I have lost my way."

"I will show it you," she answered, and rising came to him.

She led him along the winding narrow passage, pointed out to him the door of his lordship's sitting-room, and turned away—again, Donal could not help thinking, with a look as of some anxiety about him.

He knocked, and the voice of the earl bade him enter.

His lordship was in his dressing-gown, on a couch of faded satin of a gold colour, against which his pale yellow face looked cadaverous.

"Good morning, Mr. Grant," he said. "I am glad to see you better!"

"I thank you, my lord," returned Donal. "I have to make an apology. I cannot understand how it was, except, perhaps, that, being so little accustomed to strong drink,——"

"There is not the smallest occasion to say a word," inter-

rupted his lordship. "You did not once forget yourself, or cease to behave like a gentleman!"

"Your lordship is very kind. Still I cannot help being sorry. I shall take good care in the future."

"It *might* be as well," conceded the earl, "to set yourself a limit—necessarily in your case a narrow one.—Some constitutions are so immediately responsive!" he added in a murmur. "The least exhibition of—— !—But a man like you, Mr. Grant," he went on aloud, "will always know to take care of himself!"

"Sometimes, apparently, when it is too late!" rejoined Donal. "But I must not annoy your lordship with any further expression of my regret!"

"Will you dine with me to-night?" said the earl. "I am lonely now. Sometimes, for months together, I feel no need of a companion: my books and pictures content me. All at once a longing for society will seize me, and that longing my health will not permit me to indulge. I am not by nature unsociable—much the contrary. You may wonder I do not admit my own family more freely; but my wretched health makes me shrink from loud voices and abrupt motions."

"But lady Arctura!" thought Donal. "Your lordship will find me a poor substitute, I fear," he said, "for the society you would like. But I am at your lordship's service."

He could not help turning with a moment's longing and regret to his tower-nest and the company of his books and thoughts; but he did not feel that he had a choice.

CHAPTER XXXII.

THE SECOND DINNER WITH THE EARL.

He went as before, conducted by the butler, and formally announced. To his surprise, with the earl was lady Arctura. His lordship made him give her his arm, and followed.

This was to Donal a very different dinner from that of the evening before. Whether the presence of his niece made the earl rouse himself to be agreeable, or he had grown better since the morning and his spirits had risen, certainly he was not like the same man. He talked in a rather forced-playful way, but told two or three good stories; described with vivacity some of the adventures of his youth; spoke of several great men he had met;

and in short was all that could be desired in a host. Donal took no wine during dinner, the earl as before took very little, and lady Arctura none. She listened respectfully to her uncle's talk, and was attentive when Donal spoke; he thought she looked even sympathetic two or three times; and once he caught the expression as of anxiety he had seen on her face that same day twice before. It was strange, too, he thought, that, not seeing her sometimes for a week together, he should thus meet her three times in one day. When the last of the dinner was removed and the wine placed on the table, Donal thought his lordship looked as if he expected his niece to go; but she kept her place. He asked her which wine she would have, but she declined any. He filled his glass, and pushed the decanter to Donal. He too filled his glass, and drank slowly.

The talk revived. But Donal could not help fancying that the eyes of the lady now and then sought his with a sort of question in them—almost as if she feared something was going to happen to him. He attributed this to her having heard that he took too much wine the night before. The situation was unpleasant. He must, however, brave it out! When he refused a second glass, which the earl by no means pressed, he thought he saw her look relieved; but more than once thereafter he saw, or fancied he saw her glance at him with that expression of slight anxiety.

In its course the talk fell upon sheep, and Donal was relating some of his experiences with them and their dogs, greatly interested in the subject; when all at once, just as before, something seemed to burst in his head, and immediately, although he knew he was sitting at table with the earl and lady Arctura, he was uncertain whether he was not at the same time upon the side of a lonely hill, closed in a magic night of high summer, his woolly and hairy friends lying all about him, and a light glimmering faintly on the heather a little way off, which he knew for the flame that marks for a moment the footstep of an angel, when he touches ever so lightly the solid earth. He seemed to be reading the thoughts of his sheep around him, yet all the time went on talking, and knew he was talking, with the earl and the lady.

After a while, everything was changed. He was no longer either with his sheep or his company. He was alone, and walking swiftly through and beyond the park, in a fierce wind from the north-east, battling with it, and ruling it like a fiery horse. By and by came a hoarse, terrible music, which he knew for the thunderous beat of the waves on the low shore, yet imagined issuing from an indescribable instrument, gigantic and grotesque.

He felt it first—through his feet, as one feels without hearing the tones of an organ for which the building is too small to allow scope to their vibration: the waves made the ground beat against the soles of his feet as he walked; but soon he heard it like the infinitely prolonged roaring of a sky-built organ. It was drawing him to the sea, whether in the body or out of the body he knew not: he was but conscious of forms of existence: whether those forms had relation to things outside him, or whether they belonged only to the world within him, he was unaware. The roaring of the great water-organ grew louder and louder. He knew every step of the way to the shore—across the fields and over fences and stiles. He turned this way and that, to avoid here a ditch, there a deep sandy patch. And still the music grew louder and louder—and at length came in his face the driving spray: it was the flying touch of the wings on which the tones went hurrying past into the depths of awful distance! His feet were now wading through the bent-tufted sand, with the hard, bare, wave-beaten sand in front of him. Through the dark he could see the white fierceness of the hurrying waves as they rushed to the shore, then leaning, toppling, curling, self-undermined, hurled forth at once all the sound that was in them in a falling roar of defeat. Every wave was a complex chord, with winnowed tones feathering it round. He paced up and down the sand—it seemed for ages. Why he paced there he did not know—why always he turned and went back instead of going on.

Suddenly he thought he saw something dark in the hollow of a wave that swept to its fall. The moon came out as it broke, and the something was rolled in the surf up the shore. Donal stood watching it. Why should he move? What was it to him? The next wave would reclaim it for the ocean! It looked like the body of a man, but what did it matter! Many such were tossed in the hollows of that music!

But something came back to him out of the ancient years: in the ages gone by men did what they could! There was a word they used then: they said men ought to do this or that! This body might not be dead—or dead, some one might like to have it! He rushed into the water, and caught it—ere the next wave broke, though hours of cogitation, ratiocination, recollection, seemed to have intervened. The breaking wave drenched him from head to foot: he clung to his prize and dragged it out. A moment's bewilderment, and he came to himself lying on the sand, his arms round a great lump of net, lost from some fishing boat.

His illusions were gone. He was sitting in a cold wind, wet to the skin, on the border of a wild sea. A poor, shivering,

altogether ordinary and uncomfortable mortal, he sat on the shore of the German Ocean, from which he had rescued a tangled mass of net and seaweed! He dragged it beyond the reach of the waves, and set out for home.

By the time he reached the castle he was quite warm. His door at the foot of the tower was open he crept up, and was soon fast asleep.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

THE HOUSEKEEPER'S ROOM.

He was not so late the next morning.

Ere he had finished his breakfast he had made up his mind that he must beware of the earl. He was satisfied that the experiences of the past night could not be the consequence of one glass of wine. If he asked him again, he would go to dinner with him, but would drink nothing but water.

School was just over when Simmons came from his lordship, to inquire after him, and invite him to dine with him that evening. Donald immediately consented.

This time lady Arctura was not with the earl.

After as during dinner Donal declined to drink. His lordship cast on him a keen, searching glance, but it was only a glance, and took no farther notice of his refusal. The conversation, however, which had not been brilliant from the first, now sank and sank till it was not; and after a cup of coffee, his lordship, remarking that he was not feeling himself, begged Donal to excuse him, and proceeded to retire. Donal rose, and with a hope that his lordship would have a good night and feel better in the morning, left the room.

The passage outside was lighted only by a rather dim lamp, and in the distance Donal saw what he could but distinguish as the form of a woman, standing by the door which opened upon the great staircase. He supposed it at first to be one of the maids; but the servants were so few compared with the size of the castle that one was seldom to be met on stair or in passage; and besides, the form stood as if waiting for some one! As he drew nearer, he saw it was lady Arctura, and would have passed with an obeisance. But ere he could lay his hand on the lock, hers was there to prevent him. He then saw that she was agitated, and that she had

stopped him thus because her voice had at the moment failed her. The next moment, however, she recovered it, and her self-possession as well.

"Mr. Grant," she said, in a low voice, "I wish to speak to you —if you will allow me."

"I am at your service, my lady," answered Donal.

"But we cannot here! My uncle——"

"Shall we go into the picture-gallery?" suggested Donal; "there is moonlight there."

"No; that would be still nearer my uncle. His hearing is sometimes preternaturally keen; and besides, as you know, he often walks there after his evening meal. But—excuse me, Mr. Grant—you will understand me presently—are you—are you quite——?"

"You mean, my lady—am I quite myself this evening!" said Donal, wishing to help her with the embarrassing question: "—I have drunk nothing but water to-night."

With that she opened the door, and descended the stair, he following; but as soon as the curve of the staircase hid the door they had left, she stopped, and turning to him said,

"I would not have you mistake me, Mr. Grant! I should be ashamed to speak to you if——"

"Indeed I am very sorry!" said Donal, "—though hardly so much to blame as I fear you think me."

"You mistake me at once! You suppose I imagine you took too much wine last night! It would be absurd. I saw what you took! But we must not talk here. Come."

She turned again, and going down, led the way to the housekeeper's room.

They found her at work with her needle.

"Mistress Brookes," said lady Arctura, "I want to have a little talk with Mr. Grant, and there is no fire in the library: may we sit here?"

"By all means! Sit doon, my lady! Why, bairn! you look as cold as if you had been on the roof! There! sit close to the fire; you 're all trem'lin'!"

Lady Arctura obeyed like the child Mrs. Brookes called her, and sat down in the chair she gave up to her.

"I've something to see efter i' the still-room," said the housekeeper. "You sit here and hae yer crack. Sit doon, Mr. Grant. I'm glad to see you an' my lady come to word o' mooth at last. I began to think it wud never be!"

Had Donal been in the way of looking to faces for the interpretation of words and thoughts, he would have seen a shadow

sweep over lady Arctura's, followed by a flush, which he would have attributed to displeasure at this utterance of the housekeeper. But, with all his experience of the world within, and all his unusually developed power of entering into the feelings of others, he had never come to pry into those feelings, or to study their phenomena for the sake of possessing himself of them. Man was by no means an open book to him—"no, nor woman neither," but he would have scorned to supplement by such investigation what a lady chose to tell him. He sat looking into the fire, with an occasional upward glance, waiting for what was to come, and saw neither shadow nor flush. Lady Arctura sat also gazing into the fire, and seemed in no haste to begin.

"You are so good to Davie!" she said at length, and stopped.

"No better than I have to be," returned Donal. "Not to be good to Davie would be to be a wretch."

"You know, Mr. Grant, I cannot agree with you!"

"There is no immediate necessity, my lady."

"But I suppose one may be fair to another!" she went on, doubtingly, "—and it is only fair to confess that he is much more manageable since you came. Only that is no good if it does not come from the right source."

"Grapes do not come from thorns, my lady. We must not allow in evil a power of good."

She did not reply.

"He minds everything I say to him now," she resumed. "What is it makes him so good?—I wish I had had such a tutor!"

She stopped again: she had spoken out of the simplicity of her thought, but the words when said looked to her as if they ought not to have been said.

"Something is working in her!" thought Donal. "She is so different! Her voice is different!"

"But that is not what I wanted to speak to you about, Mr. Grant," she re-commenced, "—though I did want you to know I was aware of the improvement in Davie. I wished to say something about my uncle."

Here followed another pause.

"You may have remarked," she said at length, "that, though we live together, and he is my guardian, and the head of the house, there is not much communication between us."

"I have gathered as much: I ask no questions, but I cannot tell Davie not to talk to me!"

"Of course not.—Lord Morven is a strange man. I do not understand him, and I do not want to judge him, or make you

judge him. But I must speak of a fact, concerning yourself, which I have no right to keep from you."

Once more a pause followed. There was nothing now of the grand dame about Arctura.

"Has nothing occurred to wake a doubt in you?" she said at last, abruptly. "Have you not suspected him of—of using you in any way?"

"I have had an undefined ghost of a suspicion," answered Donal. "Please tell me what you know."

"I should know nothing—although, my room being near his, I should have been the more perplexed about some things—had he not made an experiment upon myself a year ago."

"Is it possible?"

"I sometimes fancy I have not been so well since. It was a great shock to me when I came to myself:—you see I am trusting you, Mr. Grant!"

"I thank you heartily, my lady," said Donal.

"I believe," continued lady Arctura, gathering courage, "that my uncle is in the habit of taking some horrible drug for the sake of its effect on his brain. There *are* people who do so! What it is I don't know, and I would rather not know. It is just as bad, surely, as taking too much wine! I have heard himself remark to Mr. Carmichael that opium was worse than wine, for it destroyed the moral sense more. Mind I don't say it is opium he takes!"

"There are other things," said Donal, "even worse!—But surely you do not mean he dared try anything of the sort on *you!*"

"I am sure he gave me something! For, once that I dined with him,—but I cannot describe the effect it had upon me! I think he wanted to see its operation on one who did not even know she had taken anything. The influence of such things is a pleasant one, they say, at first, but I would not go through such agonies as I had for the world!"

She ceased, evidently troubled by the harassing remembrance. Donal hastened to speak.

"It was because of such a suspicion, my lady, that this evening I would not even taste his wine. I am safe to-night, I trust, from the insanity—I can call it nothing else—that possessed me the last two nights!"

"Was it very dreadful?" asked lady Arctura.

"On the contrary, I had a sense of life and power such as I could never of myself have imagined!"

"Oh, Mr. Grant, do take care! Do not be tempted to take it again. I don't know where it might not have led me if I had

found it as pleasant as it was horrible; for I am sorely tried with painful thoughts, and feel sometimes as if I would do almost anything to get rid of them."

"There must be a good way of getting rid of them! Think it of God's mercy," said Donal, "that you cannot get rid of them the other way."

"I do; I do!"

"The shield of his presence was over you."

"How glad I should be to think so! But we have no right to think he cares for us till we believe in Christ—and—and—I don't know that I do believe in him!"

"Wherever you learned that, it is a terrible lie," said Donal. "Is not Christ the same always, and is he not of one mind with God? Was it not while we were yet sinners that he poured out his soul for us? It is a fearful thing to say of the perfect Love, that he is not doing all he can, with all the power of a maker over the creature he has made, to help and deliver him!"

"I know he makes his sun to shine and his rain to fall upon the evil and the good; but those good things are only of this world!"

"Are those the good things then that the Lord says the Father will give to those that ask him? How can you worship a God who gives you all the little things he does not care much about, but will not do his best for you?"

"But are there not things he cannot do for us till we believe in Christ?"

"Certainly there are. But what I want you to see is that he does all that can be done. He finds it very hard to teach us, but he is never tired of trying. Anyone who is willing to be taught of God, will by him be taught, and thoroughly taught."

"I am afraid I am doing wrong in listening to you, Mr. Grant—and the more that I cannot help wishing what you say might be true! But are you not in danger—you will pardon me for saying it—of presumption?—How can all the good people be wrong?"

"Because the greater part of their teachers have set themselves to explain God rather than to obey and enforce his will. The gospel is given to convince, not our understandings, but our hearts; that done, and never till then, our understandings will be free. Our Lord said he had many things to tell his disciples, but they were not able to hear them. If the things be true which I have heard from Sunday to Sunday since I came here, the Lord has brought us no salvation at all, but only a change of shape to our miseries. They have not redeemed you, lady Arctura, and

never will. Nothing but Christ himself, your lord and friend and brother, not all the doctrines about him, even if every one of them were true, can save you. Poor orphan children, we cannot find our God, and they would have us take instead a shocking caricature of him!"

"But how should sinners know what is or is not like the true God?"

"If a man desires God, he cannot help knowing enough of him to be capable of learning more—else how should he desire him? Made in the image of God, his idea of him cannot be all wrong. That does not make him fit to teach others—only fit to go on learning for himself. But in Jesus Christ I see the very God I want. I want a father like him. He reproaches some of those about him for not knowing him—for, if they had known God, they would have known him: they were to blame for not knowing God. No other than the God exactly like Christ can be the true God. It is a doctrine of devils that Jesus died to save us from our father. There is no safety, no good, no gladness, no purity, but with the Father, his father and our father, his God and our God."

"But God hates sin and punishes it!"

"It would be terrible if he did not. All hatred of sin is love to the sinner. Do you think Jesus came to deliver us from the punishment of our sins? He would not have moved a step for that. The horrible thing is being bad, and all punishment is help to deliver us from that, nor will punishment cease till we have ceased to be bad. God will have us good, and Jesus works out the will of his father. Where is the refuge of the child who fears his father? Is it in the farthest corner of the room? Is it down in the dungeon of the castle, my lady?"

"No, no!" cried lady Arctura; "—in his father's arms!"

"There!" said Donal, and was silent.

"I hold by Jesus!" he added after a pause, and rose as he said it, but stood where he rose.

Lady Arctura sat motionless, divided between reverence for distorted and false forms of truth taught her from her earliest years, and desire after a God whose very being is the bliss of his creatures.

Some time passed in silence, and then she too rose to depart. She held out her hand to Donal with a kind of irresolute motion, but withdrawing it, smiled almost beseechingly, and said,

"I wish I might ask you something. I know it is a rude question, but if you could see all, you would answer me and let the offence go."

"I will answer you anything you choose to ask."

"That makes it the more difficult; but I will—I cannot bear to remain longer in doubt: did you really write that poem you gave to Kate Graeme—compose it, I mean, your own self?"

"I made no secret of that when I gave it her," said Donal, not perceiving her drift.

"Then you did really write it?"

Donal looked at her in perplexity. Her face grew very red, and tears began to come in her eyes.

"You must pardon me!" she said: "I am so ignorant! And we live in such an out-of-the-way place that—that it seems very unlikely a real poet——! And then I have been told there are people who have a passion for appearing to do the thing they are not able to do, and I was anxious to be quite sure! My mind would keep brooding over it, and wondering, and longing to know for certain!—So I resolved at last that I would be rid of the doubt, even at the risk of offending you. I know I have been rude—unpardonably rude, but——"

"But," supplemented Donal, with a most sympathetic smile, for he understood her as his own thought, "you do not feel quite sure yet! What *a priori* reason do you see why I should not be able to write verses? There is no rule as to where poetry grows: one place is as good as another for that!"

"I hope you will forgive me! I hope I have not offended you *very* much!"

"Nobody in such a world as this ought to be offended at being asked for proof. If there are in it rogues that look like honest men, how is any one, without a special gift of insight, to be always sure of the honest man? Even the man whom a woman loves best will sometimes tear her heart to pieces! I will give you all the proof you can desire.—And lest the tempter should say I made up the proof itself between now and to-morrow morning, I will fetch it at once."

"Oh, Mr. Grant, spare me! I am not, indeed I am not so bad as that!"

"Who can tell when or whence the doubt may wake again, or what may wake it!"

"At least let me explain a little before you go," she said.

"Certainly," he answered, reseating himself, in compliance with her example.

"Miss Graeme told me that you had never seen a garden like theirs before!"

"I never did. There are none such, I fancy, in our part of the country."

"Nor in our neighbourhood either."

"Then what is surprising in it?"

"Nothing in that. But is there not something surprising in your being able to write a poem like that about a garden such as you had never seen? One would say you must have been familiar with it from childhood to be able so to enter into the spirit of the place!"

"Perhaps if I had been familiar with it from childhood, that might have disabled me from feeling the spirit of it, for then might it not have looked to me as it looked to those in whose time such gardens were the fashion? Two things are necessary—first, that there should be a spirit in a place, and next that the place should be seen by one whose spirit is capable of giving house-room to its spirit.—By the way, does the ghost-lady feel the place all right?"

"I am not sure that I know what you mean; but I felt the grass with her feet as I read, and the wind lifting my hair. I seemed to know exactly how she felt!"

"Now tell me, were you ever a ghost?"

"No," she answered, looking in his face like a child—without even a smile.

"Did you ever see a ghost?"

"No, never."

"Then how should you know how a ghost would feel?"

"I see! I cannot answer you."

Donal rose.

"I am indeed ashamed!" said lady Arctura.

"Ashamed of giving me the chance of proving myself a true man?"

"That, at least, is no longer necessary!"

"But I want my revenge. As a punishment for doubting one whom you had so little ground for believing, you shall be compelled to see the proof—that is, if you will do me the favour to wait here till I come back. I shall not be long, though it is some distance to the top of Baliol's tower."

"Davie told me your room was there: do you not find it cold? It must be very lonely! I wonder why mistress Brookes put you there!"

Donal assured her he could not have had a place more to his mind, and before she could well think he had reached the foot of his stair, was back with a roll of papers, which he laid on the table.

"There!" he said, opening it out; "if you will take the trouble to go over these, you may read the growth of the poem. Here first you see it blocked out rather roughly, and much blotted

with erasures and substitutions. Here next you see the result copied—clean to begin with, but afterwards scored and scored. You see the words I chose instead of the first, and afterwards in their turn rejected, until in the proofs I reached those which I have as yet let stand. I do not fancy Miss Graeme has any doubt the verses are mine, for it was plain she thought them rubbish. From your pains to know who wrote them, I believe you do not think so badly of them!"

She thought he was satirical, and gave a slight sigh as of pain. It went to his heart.

"I did not mean the smallest reflection, my lady, on your desire for satisfaction," he said; "rather, indeed, it flatters me. But is it not strange the heart should be less ready to believe what seems worth believing? Something must be true: why not the worthy—oftener at least than the unworthy? Why should it be easier to believe hard things of God, for instance, than lovely things?—or that one man copied from another, than that he should have made the thing himself? Some would yet say I contrived all this semblance of composition in order to lay the surer claim to that to which I had none—nor would take the trouble to follow the thing through its development! But it will be easy for you, my lady, and no bad exercise in logic and analysis, to determine whether the genuine growth of the poem be before you in these papers or not."

"I shall find it most interesting," said lady Arctura: "so much I can tell already! I never saw anything of the kind before, and had no idea how poetry was made. Does it always take so much labour?"

"Some verses take much more; some none at all. The labour is in getting the husks of expression cleared off, so that the thought may show itself plainly."

At this point Mrs. Brookes, thinking probably the young people had had long enough conference, entered, and after a little talk with her, lady Arctura kissed her and bade her good night. Donal retired to his aerial chamber, wondering whether the lady of the house had indeed changed as much as she seemed to have changed.

From that time, whether it was that lady Arctura had previously avoided meeting him and now did not, or from other causes, Donal and she met much oftener as they went about the place. nor did they ever pass without a mutual smile and greeting.

The next day but one, she brought him his papers to the schoolroom. She had read every erasure and correction, she told him, and could no longer have had a doubt that the writer of the

papers was the maker of the verses, even had she not previously learned thorough confidence in the man himself.

"They would possibly fail to convince a jury though!" he said, as he rose and went to throw them in the fire.

Divining his intent, Arctura darted after him, and caught them just in time.

"Let me keep them," she pleaded, "—for my humiliation!"

"Do with them what you like, my lady," said Donal. "They are of no value to me—except that you care for them."

CHAPTER XXXIV.

COBBLER AND CASTLE.

In the bosom of the family in which the elements seem most kindly mixed, there may yet lie some root of discord and disruption, upon which the foreign influence necessary to its appearance above ground, has not yet come to operate. That things are quiet is no proof, only a hopeful sign of harmony. In a family of such poor accord as that at the castle, the peace might well at any moment be broken.

Lord Forgue had been for some time on a visit to Edinburgh, had doubtless there been made much of, and had returned with a considerable development of haughtiness, and of that freedom which means subjugation to self, and freedom from the law of liberty. It is often when a man is least satisfied—not with himself but with his immediate doings—that he is most ready to assert his superiority to the restraints he might formerly have grumbled against, but had not dared to dispute—and to claim from others such consideration as accords with a false idea of his personal standing. But for a while Donal and he barely saw each other; Donal had no occasion to regard him; and lord Forgue kept so much to himself that Davie made lamentation: Percy was not half so jolly as he used to be!

For a fortnight Eppy had not been to see her grand-parents; and as the last week something had prevented Donal also from paying them his customary visit, the old people had naturally become uneasy; and one frosty twilight, when the last of the sunlight had turned to cold green in the west, Andrew Comin appeared in the castle kitchen, asking to see mistress Brookes. He was kindly received by the servants, among whom Eppy was

not present; and Mrs. Brookes, who had a genuine respect for the cobbler, soon came to greet him. She told him she knew no reason why Eppy had not gone to inquire after them as usual: she would send for her, she said, and left the kitchen.

Eppy was not at the moment to be found, but Donal, whom mistress Brookes had gone herself to seek, went at once to the kitchen.

"Will you come out a bit, Andrew," he said, "—if you're not tired? It's a fine night, and it's easy to talk in the gloamin'!"

Andrew consented with alacrity.

On the side of the castle away from the town, the descent was at first by a succession of terraces with steps from the one to the other, the terraces themselves being little flower-gardens. At the bottom of the last of these terraces and parallel with them, was a double row of trees, forming a long narrow avenue between two little doors in two walls at opposite ends of the castle. One of these led to some of the offices; the other admitted to a fruit garden which turned the western shoulder of the hill, and found for the greater part a nearly southern exposure. At this time of the year it was a lonely enough place, and at this time of the day more than likely to be altogether deserted: thither Donal would lead his friend. Going out therefore by the kitchen-door, they went first into a stable-yard, from which descended steps to the castle-well, on the level of the second terrace. Thence they arrived, by more steps, at the mews where in old times the hawks were kept, now rather ruinous though not quite neglected. Here the one wall-door opened on the avenue which led to the other. It was one of the pleasantest walks in immediate proximity to the castle.

The first of the steely stars were shining through the naked rafters of leafless boughs overhead, as Donal and the cobbler stepped, gently talking, into the aisle of trees. The old man looked up, gazed for a moment in silence, and said:—

"'The heavens declare the glory o' God, an' the firmament showeth his handy-work.' I used, whan I was a lad, to study astronomy a wee, i' the houp o' better hearin' what the h'avens declared aboot the glory o' God: I wud fain un'erstan' the speech ae day cried across the nicht to the ither. But I was sair disapp'intit. The things the astronomer tellt semple fowk war verra won'erfu', but I couldna fin' i' my hert 'at they made me think ony mair o' God nor I did afore. I dinna mean to say they michtna be competent to work that in anither, but it wasna my experrience o' them. My hert was some sair at this, for ye see I was set upo' winnin' intil the presence o' him I couldna bide frae, an' at that time I hadna learnt to gang straucht to him wha's the express

image o' 's person, but aye soucht him throuw the philosophy—eh, but it was bairnly philosophy !—o' the guid buiks 'at dwall upo' the natur' o' God an' a' that, an' his hatred o' sin an' a' that—pairt an' pairt true, nae doobt ! but I wantit God great an' near, an' they made him oot sma', sma', an' unco' far awa'. Ae nicht I was oot by mysel' upo' the shore, jist as the stars war teetin' oot. An' it wasna as gien they war feart o' the sun, an' pleast 'at he was gane, but as gien they war a' teetin' oot to see what had come o' their Father o' Lichts. A' at ance I cam to mysel', like oot o' some blin' delusion. Up I cuist my e'en aboon—an' eh, there was the h'aven as God made it—awfu' !—big an' deep, ay faddomless deep, an' fu' o' the wan'erin' yet steady lichts 'at naething can blaw oot, but the breath o' his mooth ! Awa' up an' up it gaed, an' deeper an' deeper ! an' my e'en gaed traivellin' awa' an' awa', till it seemed as though they never could win back to me. A' at ance they drappit frae the lift like a laverock, an' lichtit upo' the horizon, whaur the sea an' the sky met like richteousness an' peace kissin' ane anither, as the psalm says. Noo I canna tell what it was, but jist there whaur the earth an' the sky cam thegither, was the meetin' o' my earthly sowl wi' God's h'avenly sowl ! There was bonny colours, an' bonny lichts, an' a bonny grit star hingin' ower 't a', but it was nane o' a' thae things ; it was something deeper nor a', an' heicher nor a' ! Frae that moment I saw—no *hoo* the h'avens declare the glory o' God, but I saw them declarin' 't, an' I wantit nae mair. Astronomy for me micht sit an' wait for a better warl', whaur fowk didna weir oot their shune, an' ither fowk hadna to men' them. For what is the great glory o' God but that, though no man can comprehen' him, he comes doon, an' lays his cheek til his man's, an' says til him, 'Eh, my cratur !'"

While the cobbler was thus talking, they had gone the length of the avenue, and were within less than two trees of the door of the fruit-garden, when it opened, and was hurriedly shut again—not, however, before Donal had caught sight, as he believed, of the form of Eppy. He called her by name, and ran to the door, followed by Andrew : the same suspicion had struck both of them at once ! Donal lifted the latch, and would have opened the door, but some one held it against him, and he heard the noise of an attempt to push the rusty bolt into the staple. He set his strength to it, and forced the door open. Lord Forgue was on the other side of it, and a little way off stood Eppy trembling. Donal turned away from his lordship, and said to the girl,

"Eppy, here's your grandfather come to see you !"

The cobbler, however, went up to lord Forgue.

"You're a young man, my lord," he said, "an' may regard

it as folly in an auld man to interfere between you an' your wull; but I warn ye, my lord, excep' you cease to carry yourself thus towards my granddaughter, his lordship, your father, shall be informed of the matter. Eppy, you come home with me."

"I will not," said Eppy, her voice trembling with passion, though which passion it were hard to say; "I am a free woman. I make my own living. I will not be treated like a child!"

"I will speak to mistress Brookes," said the old man, with sad dignity.

"And make her turn me away!" said Eppy.

She seemed quite changed—bold and determined—was probably relieved that she could no more play a false part. His lordship stood and said nothing.

"But don't you think, grandfather," continued Eppy, "that whatever mistress Brookes says or does, I'll go home with you! I've saved money, and, as I can't get another place here when you've taken away my character, I'll leave the country."

His lordship advanced, and with strained composure said,

"I confess, Mr. Comin, things do look against us. It *is* awkward you should have found us together, but you know"—and here he attempted a laugh—"we are told not to judge by appearances!"

"We may be forced to act by them, though, my lord!" said Andrew. "I should be sorry to judge aither of you by them. Eppy must come home with me, or it will be more awkward yet for both of you!"

"Oh, if you threaten us," said Forgue contemptuously, "then of course we are very frightened! But you had better beware! You will only make it the more difficult for me to do your granddaughter the justice I always intended."

"What your lordship's notion o' justice may be, I wull not trouble you to explain," said the old man. "All I desire for the present is, that she come home with me."

"Let us leave the matter to mistress Brookes!" said Forgue. "I shall easily satisfy her that there is no occasion for any hurry. Believe me, you will only bring trouble on the innocent!"

"Then it canna be on you, my lord! for in this thing you have not behaved as a gentleman ought!" said the cobbler.

"You dare tell me so!" cried Forgue, striding up to the little old man, as if he would sweep him away with the very wind of his approach.

"Yes; for else how should I say it to another, an' that may soon be necessar'!" answered the cobbler. "Didna yer lordship promise an en' to the haill mecserable affair?"

"I remember nothing of the sort."

"You did to me!" said Donal.

"Do hold your tongue, Grant, and don't make things worse. To you I can easily explain it. Besides, you have nothing to do with it now this good fellow has taken it up. It is quite possible, besides, to break one's word to the ear and yet keep it to the sense."

"The only thing to justify that suggestion," said Donal, "would be that you had married Eppy, or were about to marry her!"

Eppy would have spoken; but she only gave a little cry, for Forgue put his hand over her mouth.

"You hold your tongue!" he said; "you will only complicate matters!"

"And there's another point, my lord," resumed Donal: "you say I have nothing to do now with the affair: if not for my friend's sake, I have for my own."

"What do you mean?"

"That I am in the house a paid servant, and must not allow anything mischievous to go on in it without acquainting my master."

"You acknowledge, Mr. Grant, that you are neither more nor less than a paid servant, but you mistake your duty as such. I shall be happy to explain it to you.—You have nothing whatever to do with what goes on in the house; you have but to mind your work. I told you before, you are my brother's tutor, not mine! To interfere with what I do, is nothing less than a piece of damned impertinence!"

"That impertinence, however, I intend to be guilty of the moment I can get audience of your father."

"You will not, if I give you such explanation as satisfies you I have done the girl no harm, and mean honestly by her!" said Forgue in a confident, yet somewhat conciliatory tone.

"In any case," returned Donal, "you having once promised, and then broken your promise, I shall without fail tell your father all I know."

"And ruin her, and perhaps me too, for life?"

"The truth will ruin only those that ought to be ruined!" said Donal.

Forgue sprang upon him, and struck him a heavy blow between the eyes. He had been having lessons in boxing while in Edinburgh, and had confidence in himself. It was a well-planted blow, and Donal unprepared for it. He staggered against the wall, and for a moment could neither see nor think: all he knew was that

there was something or other he had to attend to. His lordship, excusing himself perhaps on the ground of necessity, there being a girl in the case, would have struck him again; but Andrew threw himself between, and received the blow for him.

As Donal came to himself, he heard a groan from the ground, and looking, saw Andrew at his feet, and understood.

"Dear old man!" he said; "he dared to strike *you!*"

"He didna mean 't," returned Andrew feebly. "Are ye winnin' ower 't, sir? He gae ye a terrible ane! Ye micht hae h'ard it across the street!"

"I shall be all right in a minute!" answered Donal, wiping the blood out of his eyes. "I've a good hard head, thank God! —But what has become of them?"

"Ye didna think he wud be waitin' to see 's come to oorsel's!" said the cobbler.

With Donal's help, and great difficulty, he rose, and they stood looking at each other through the starlight, bewildered and uncertain. The cobbler was the first to recover his wits.

"It's o' no mainner of use," he said, "to rouse the castel wi' hue an' cry! What hae we to say but 'at we faund the twa i' the gairden thegither! It wud but raise a clash—the which, fable or fac', wud do naething for naebody! His lordship maun be loot ken, as ye say; but wull his lordship believe ye, sir? I'm some i' the min' the yoong man 's awa' til's faither a'ready, to prejudeese him again' onything ye may say."

"That makes it the more necessary," said Donal, "that I should go at once to his lordship. He will fall out upon me for not having told him at once; but I must not mind that: if I were not to tell him now, he would have a good case against me."

They were already walking towards the house, the old man giving a groan now and then. He could not go in, he said; he would walk gently on, and Donal would overtake him.

It was an hour and a half before Andrew got home, and Donal had not overtaken him.

CHAPTER XXXV.

THE EARL'S BEDCHAMBER.

HAVING washed the blood from his face, Donal sought Simmons.

"His lordship can't see you now, I am sure, sir," answered the butler; "lord Forgue is with him."

Donal turned and went straight up to lord Morven's apartment. As he passed the door of his bedroom opening on the corridor, he heard voices in debate. He entered the sitting-room. There was no one there. It was not a time for ceremony. He knocked at the door of the bedroom. The voices within were loud, and no answer came. He knocked again, and received an angry permission to enter. He entered, closed the door behind him, and stood in sight of his lordship, waiting what should follow.

Lord Morven was sitting up in bed, his face so pale and distorted that Donal thought elsewhere he should hardly have recognized it. The bed was a large four-post bed; its curtains were drawn close to the posts, admitting as much air as possible. At the foot of it stood lord Forgue, his handsome, shallow face flushed with anger, his right arm straight down by his side, and the hand of it clenched hard. He turned when Donal entered. A fiercer flush overspread his face, but almost immediately the look of rage yielded to one of determined insult. Possibly even the appearance of Donal was a relief to being alone with his father.

"Mr. Grant," stammered his lordship, speaking with pain, "you are well come!—just in time to hear a father curse his son!"

"Even such a threat shall not make me play a dishonourable part!" said Forgue, looking however anything but honourable, for the heart, not the brain, moulds the expression.

"Mr. Grant," resumed the father, "I have found you a man of sense and refinement! If you had been tutor to this degenerate boy, the worst trouble of my life would not have overtaken me!"

Forgue's lip curled, but he did not speak, and his father went on.

"Here is this fellow come to tell me to my face that he intends the ruin and disgrace of the family by a low marriage!"

"It will not be the first time it has been so disgraced!"

retorted the son, "—if fresh peasant-blood be indeed a disgrace to any family!"

"Bah! the hussey is not even a wholesome peasant-girl!" cried the father. "Who do you think she is, Mr. Grant?"

"I do not need to guess, my lord," replied Donal. "I came now to inform your lordship of what I had myself seen."

"She must leave the house this instant!"

"Then I too leave it, my lord!" said Forgue.

"Where's your money?" returned the earl contemptuously.

Forgue shifted to an attack upon Donal.

"Your lordship hardly places confidence in me," he said; "but it is not the less my duty to warn you against this man: months ago he knew what was going on, and comes to tell you now because this evening I chastised him for his rude interference."

In cooler blood lord Forgue would not have shown such meanness; but passion brings to the front the thing that lurks.

"And it is no doubt to the necessity for forestalling his disclosure that I owe the present ingenuous confession!" said lord Morven. "—But explain, Mr. Grant."

"My lord," said Donal calmly, "I became aware that there was something between lord Forgue and the girl, and was alarmed for the girl: she is the child of friends to whom I am much beholden. But on the promise of both that the thing should end, I concluded it better not to trouble your lordship. I may have blundered in this, but I did what seemed best. This night, however, I discovered that things were going as before, and it became imperative on my position in your house that I should make your lordship acquainted with the fact. He assevered there was nothing dishonest between them, but, having deceived me once, how was I to trust him again!"

"How indeed! the young blackguard!" said his lordship, casting a fierce glance at his son.

"Allow me to remark," said Forgue, with comparative coolness, "that I deceived no one. What I promised was, that the affair should not go on: it did not; from that moment it assumed a different and serious aspect. I now intend to marry the girl."

"I tell you, Forgue, if you do I will disown you."

Forgue smiled an impertinent smile and held his peace: the threat had for him no terror.

"I shall be the better able," continued his lordship, "to provide suitably for Davie; he is what a son ought to be! But hear me, Forgue: you must be aware that, if I left you all I had, it would be beggary for one handicapped with a title. You may think my anger unreasonable, but it comes solely of anxiety on

your account. Nothing but a suitable marriage—the most suitable of all is within your arm's length—can save you from the life of a moneyless peer—the most pitiable object on the face of the earth. Were it possible to ignore your rank, you have no profession, no trade even, in these trade-loving times, to fall back upon. Except you marry as I please, you will have nothing from me but the contempt of a title without a farthing to keep it decent. You threaten to leave the house—can you pay for a railway-ticket?"

Forgue was silent for a moment.

"My lord," he said, "I have given my word to the girl: would you have me disgrace your name by breaking it?"

"Tut! tut! there are words and words! What obligation can there be in the rash promises of an unworthy love! Still less are they binding where the man is not his own master! You are under a bond to your family, under a bond to society, under a bond to your country. Marry this girl, and you will be an outcast; marry as I would have you, and no one will think the worse of you for a foolish vow in your boyhood. Bah! the merest rumour of it will never rise into the serene air of your position."

"And let the girl go and break her heart!" said Forgue, with look black as death.

"You need fear no such catastrophe! You are no such marvel among men that a kitchen-wench will break her heart for you. She will be sorry for herself, no doubt; but it will be nothing more than she expected, and will only confirm her opinion of you: she knows well enough the risk she runs!"

While he spoke, Donal, waiting his turn, stood as on hot iron. Such sayings were in his ears the foul talk of hell. The moment the earl ceased, he turned to Forgue, and said:—

"My lord, you have removed my harder thoughts of you! You have indeed broken your word, but in a way infinitely nobler than I believed you capable of!"

Lord Morven stared dumbfounded.

"Your comments are out of place, Mr. Grant!" said Forgue, with something like dignity. "The matter is between my father and myself. If you wanted to beg my pardon, you should have waited a fitting opportunity!"

Donal held his peace. He had felt bound to show sympathy with his enemy where he was right.

The earl was perplexed: his one poor ally had gone over to the enemy! He took a glass from the table beside him, and drank: then, after a moment's silence, apparently of exhaustion and suffering, said,

"Mr. Grant, I desire a word with you.—Leave the room, Forgue."

"My lord," returned Forgue, "you order me from the room to confer with one whose presence with you is an insult to me!"

"He seems to me," answered his father bitterly, "to be after your own mind in the affair!—How indeed should it be otherwise! But so far I have found Mr. Grant a man of honour, and I desire to have some private conversation with him. I therefore request you will leave us alone together."

This was said so politely, yet with such latent command, that the youth dared not refuse compliance.

The moment he closed the door behind him,

"I am glad he yielded," said the earl, "for I should have had to ask you to put him out, and I hate rows. Would you have done it?"

"I would have tried."

"Thank you. Yet a moment ago you took his part against me!"

"On the girl's part—and for his honesty too, my lord!"

"Come now, Mr. Grant! I understand your prejudices. I cannot expect you to look on the affair as I do. I am glad to have a man of such sound general principles to form the character of my younger son; but it is plain as a mountain that what would be the duty of a young man in your rank of life toward a young woman in the same rank, would be simple ruin to one in lord Forgue's position. A capable man like you can make a living a hundred different ways; to one born with the burden of a title, and without the means of supporting it, marriage with such a girl means poverty, gambling, hunger, squabbling, dirt—suicide!"

"My lord," answered Donal, "the moment a man speaks of love to a woman, be she as lowly and ignorant as mother Eve, that moment rank and privilege vanish, and distinction is annihilated."

The earl gave a small sharp smile.

"You would make a good pleader, Mr. Grant! But if you had seen the consequences of such marriage half as often as I, you would modify your ideas. Mark what I say: *this marriage shall not take place—by God!* What! should I for a moment talk of it with coolness were there the smallest actual danger of its occurrence—did I not know that it never could, never shall take place! The boy is a fool, and he shall know it! I have him in my power—neck and heels in my power! He does not know it, and never could guess how; but it is true: one word from me, and the rascal is paralyzed! Oblige me by telling him what I have just said. The absurd marriage shall *not* take place,

I repeat. Invalid as I am, I am not yet reduced to the condition of an obedient father."

He took up a small bottle, poured a little from it, added water, and drank—then resumed.

"Now for the girl; who knows about it?"

"So far as I am aware, no one but her grandfather. He had come to the castle to inquire after her, and was with me when we came upon them in the fruit garden."

"Then let no further notice be taken of it. Tell no one—not even Mrs. Brookes. Let the young fools do as they please."

"I cannot consent to that, my lord."

"Why, what the devil have you to do with it?"

"I am the friend of her people."

"Pooh! pooh! don't talk rubbish. What is it to them! I'll see to them. It will all come right. The affair will settle itself. By Jove, I'm sorry you interfered! The thing would have been much better left alone."

"My lord," said Donal, "I can listen to nothing in this strain."

"All I ask is—promise not to interfere.

"I will not."

"Thank you."

"My lord, you mistake. I will not promise. Nay, I will interfere. What to do, I do not now know; but I will save the girl if I can."

"And ruin an ancient family! You think nothing of that!"

"Its honour, my lord, will be best preserved in that of the girl."

"Damn you? will you preach to me?"

Notwithstanding his fierce words, Donal could not help seeing or imagining an almost suppliant look in his eye.

"You must do as I tell you in my house," he went on, "or you will soon see the outside of it. Come: marry the girl yourself—she is deuced pretty—and I will give you five hundred pounds for your wedding journey.—Poor Davie!"

"Your lordship insults me."

"Then, damn you! be off to your lessons, and take your insolent face out of my sight."

"If I remain in your house, my lord, it is for Davie's sake."

"Go away," said the earl; and Donal went.

He had hardly closed the door behind him, when he heard a bell ring violently; and ere he reached the bottom of the stair, he met the butler panting up as fast as his short legs and red nose would permit. He would have stopped to question Donal, who

hastened past him, and in the refuge of his own room, sat down to think. Had his conventional dignity been with him a matter of importance, he would have left the castle the moment he got his things together; but he thought much more of Davie, and much more of Eppy.

He had hardly seated himself when he jumped up again: he must see Andrew Comin!

CHAPTER XXXVI.

A NIGHT-WATCH.

When he reached the bottom of the hill, there at the gate was Forgue, walking up and down, apparently waiting for him. He would have passed him, but Forgue stepped in front of him.

"Grant," he said, "it is well we should understand each other!"

"I think, my lord, if you do not yet understand me, it can scarcely be my fault."

"What did my father say?"

"I would deliver to your lordship a message he gave me for you but for two reasons—one, that I believe he changed his mind though he did not precisely say so, and the other, that I will not serve him or you in the matter."

"Then you intend neither to meddle nor make?"

"That is my affair, my lord. I will not take your lordship into my confidence."

"Don't be unreasonable, now! Do get off your high horse. Can't you understand a fellow? Everybody can't keep his temper as you do! I mean the girl no harm."

"I will not talk with you about her. And whatever you insist on saying to me, I will use against you without scruple, should occasion offer."

As he spoke he caught a look on Forgue's face which revealed somehow that it was not for him he had been waiting, but for Eppy. He turned and went back towards the castle: he might meet her! Forgue called after him, but he paid no heed.

As he hastened up the hill, not so much as the rustle of bird or mouse did he hear. He lingered about the top of the road for half an hour, then turned and went to the cobbler's.

He found Doory in great distress; for she was not merely

sore troubled about her son's child, but Andrew was in bed and suffering great pain. The moment Donal saw him he went for the doctor. He said a rib was broken, bound him up, and gave him some medicine. All done that could be done, Donal sat down to watch beside him.

He lay still, with closed eyes and white face. So patient was he that his very pain found utterance in a sort of blind smile. Donal did not know much about pain : he could read in Andrew's look his devotion to the will of him whose being was his peace, but he did not know above what suffering his faith lifted him, and held him hovering yet safe. His faith made him one with life, the eternal Life—and that is salvation.

In closest contact with the divine, the original relation restored, the source once more holding its issue, the divine love pouring itself into the deepest vessel of the man's being, itself but a vessel for the holding of the diviner and divinest, who can wonder if keenest pain should not be able to quench the smile of the prostrate ! Few indeed have reached the point of health to laugh at disease, but are there none ? Let not a man say because he cannot that no one can.

The old woman was very calm, only every now and then she would lift her hands and shake her head, and look as if the universe were going to pieces, because her husband lay there by the stroke of the ungodly. And if he had lain there forgotten, then indeed the universe would have been going to pieces ! When he coughed, every pang seemed to go through her body to her heart. Love is as lovely in the old as in the young—lovelier when in them, as often, it is more sympathetic and unselfish—that is, more true.

Donal wrote to Mrs. Brookes that he would not be home that night ; and having found a messenger at the inn, settled himself to watch by his friend.

The hours glided quietly over. Andrew slept a good deal, and seemed to have pleasant visions. He was finding yet more saving. Now and then his lips would move as if he were holding talk with some friendly soul. Once Donal heard the murmured words, "Lord, I'm a' yer ain ;" and noted that his sleep grew deeper thereafter. He did not wake till the day began to dawn. Then he asked for some water. Seeing Donal, and divining that he had been by his bedside all the night, he thanked him with a smile and a little nod—which somehow brought to his memory certain words Andrew had spoken on another occasion : "There's ane, an' there's a' ; an' the a' 's ane, an' the ane 's a'."

When Donal reached the castle, he found his breakfast and

Mrs. Brookes waiting for him. She told him that Eppy, meeting her in the passage the night before, had burst into tears, but she could get nothing out of her, and had sent her to her room; this morning she had not come down at the proper time, and when she sent after her, did not come: she went up herself, and found her determined to leave the castle that very day; she was now packing her things to go, nor did she see any good in trying to prevent her.

Donal said if she would go home, there was plenty for her to do there; old people's bones were not easy to mend, and it would be some time before her grandfather was well again!

Mrs. Brookes said she would not keep her now if she begged to stay; she was afraid she would come to grief, and would rather she went home; she would take her home herself.

"The lass is no an ill ane," she added: "but she disna ken what she wud be at. She wants some o' the Lord's ain discipleen, I'm thinkin!"

"An' that ye may be sure she'll get, mistress Brookes!" said Donal.

Eppy was quite ready to go home and help nurse her grandfather. She thought her conduct must by this time be the talk of the castle, and was in mortal terror of lord Morven. All the domestics feared him—it would be hard to say precisely why; it came in part of seeing him so seldom that he had almost come to represent the ghost some said lived in the invisible room and haunted the castle.

It was the easier for Eppy to go home that her grandmother needed her, and that her grandfather would not be able to say much to her. She was an affectionate girl, and yet her grandfather's condition roused in her no indignation; for the love of being loved is such a blinding thing, that the greatest injustice from the dearest to the next dearest will by some natures be readily tolerated. God help us! we are a mean set—and meanest the man who is ablest to justify himself!

Mrs. Brookes, having prepared a heavy basket of good things for Eppy to carry home to her grandmother, and made it the heavier for the sake of punishing her with the weight of it, set out with her, saying to herself,

"The jaud wants a wheen harder wark nor I hae hauden till her han', an' doobtless it's preparin' for her!"

She was kindly received, without a word of reproach, by her grandmother; the sufferer, forgetful of, or forgiving her words of rejection in the garden, smiled when she came near his bedside; and she turned away to conceal the tears she could not repress.

She loved her grand-parents, and she loved the young lord, and she could not get the two loves to dwell together peaceably in her mind—a common difficulty with our weak, easily divided, hardly united natures—frangible, friable, readily distorted! It needs no less than God himself, not only to unite us to one another, but to make a whole of the ill-fitting, roughly disjointed portions of our individual beings. Tearfully but diligently she set about her duties; and not only the heart, but the limbs and joints of her grandmother were relieved by her presence; while doubtless she herself found some refuge from anxious thought in the service she rendered. What she saw as her probable future, I cannot say; one hour her confidence in her lover's faithfulness would be complete, the next it would be dashed with huge blots of uncertainty; but her grandmother rejoiced over her as out of harm's way.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

LORD FORGUE AND LADY ARCTURA.

At the castle things fell into their old routine. Nothing had been arranged between lord Forgue and Eppy, and he seemed content that it should be so. Mrs. Brookes told him that she had gone home: he made neither remark nor inquiry, manifesting no interest.

It would be well his father should not see it necessary to push things farther! He did not want to turn out of the castle! Without means, what was he to do? The marriage could not be to-day or to-morrow! and in the meantime he could see Eppy, perhaps more easily than at the castle! He would contrive! He was sorry he had hurt the old fellow, but he could not help it! he *would* get in the way! Things would have been much worse if he had not got first to his father! He would wait a bit, and see what would turn up! For the tutor-fellow, he must not quarrel with him downright! No good would come of that! In the end he would have his way! and that in spite of them all!

But what he really wanted he did not know. He only knew, or imagined, that he was over head and ears in love with the girl: what was to come of it was all in the clouds. He had said he meant to marry her; but to that statement he had been driven, more than he knew, by the desire to escape the contempt of the

tutor he scorned; and he rejoiced that he had at least discomfited him. He knew that if he did marry Eppy, or any one else of whom his father did not approve, he had nothing to look for but absolute poverty, for he knew no way to earn money; he was therefore unprepared to defy him immediately—whatever he might do by and by. He said to himself sometimes that he was as willing as any man to work for his wife if only he knew how; but when he said so, had he always a clear vision of Eppy as the wife in prospect? Alas, it would take years to make him able to earn even a woman's wages! It would be a fine thing for a lord to labour like a common man for the support of a child of the people for whom he had sacrificed everything; but where was the possibility? When thoughts like these grew too many for him, Forgue wished he had never seen the girl. His heart would immediately reproach him; immediately he would comfort his conscience with the reflection that to wish he had never seen her was a very different thing from wishing to act as if he had. He loafed about in her neighbourhood as much as he dared, haunted the house itself in the twilight, and at night even ventured sometimes to creep up the stair, but for some time he never even saw her: for days Eppy never went out of doors except into the garden.

Though she had not spoken of it, Arctura had had more than a suspicion that something was going on between her cousin and the pretty maid; for the little window of her sitting room partially overlooked a certain retired spot favoured of the lovers; and after Eppy left the house, Davie, though he did not associate the facts, noted that she was more cheerful than before. But there was no enlargement of intercourse between her and Forgue. They knew it was the wish of the head of the house that they should marry, but the earl had been wise enough to say nothing openly to either of them: he believed the thing would have a better chance on its own merits; and as yet they had shown no sign of drawing to each other. It might, perhaps, have been otherwise on his part had not the young lord been taken with the pretty housemaid, though at first he had thought of nothing more than a little passing flirtation, reckoning his advantage with her by the height on which he stood in his own regard; but it was from no jealousy that Arctura was relieved by the departure of Eppy. She had never seen anything attractive in her cousin, and her religious impressions would have been enough to protect her from any drawing to him: had they not poisoned in her even the virtue of common human friendliness toward a very different man? The sense of relief she had when Eppy went, lay in being delivered from the presence of something clandestine, with which she could not interfere so

far as to confess knowledge of it. It had rendered her uneasy; she had felt shy and uncomfortable. Once or twice she had been on the point of saying to Mrs. Brookes that she thought her cousin and Eppy very oddly familiar, but had failed of courage. It was no wonder therefore that she should be more cheerful.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

ARCTURA AND SOPHIA.

About this time her friend, Miss Carmichael, returned from a rather lengthened visit. But after the atonement that had taken place between her and Donal, it was with some anxiety that lady Arctura looked forward to seeing her. She shrank from telling her what had come about through the wonderful poem, as she thought it, which had so bewitched her. She shrank too from showing her the verses: they were not of a kind, she was sure, to meet with recognition from her. She knew she would make game of them, and that not good-humouredly like Kate, who yet confessed to some beauty in them. For herself, the poem and the study of its growth had ministered so much nourishment to certain healthy poetic seeds lying hard and dry in her bosom, that they had begun to sprout, indeed to shoot rapidly up. Donal's poem could not fail therefore to be to her thenceforward something sacred. A related result also was that it had made her aware of something very defective in her friend's constitution: she did not know whether in her constitution mental, moral, or spiritual: probably it was in all three. Doubtless, thought Arctura, she knew most things better than she, and certainly had a great deal more common sense; but, on the other hand, was she not satisfied with far less than she could be satisfied with? To believe as her friend believed would not save her from insanity! She must be made on a smaller scale of necessities than herself! How was she able to love the God she said she believed in? God should at least be as beautiful as his creature could imagine him! But Miss Carmichael would say her poor earthly imagination was not to occupy itself with such a high subject! Oh, why would not God tell her something about himself—something direct—straight from himself? Why should she only hear of him at second hand—always and always?

Alas, poor girl! second hand? Five hundredth hand rather? And she might have been all the time communing with the very God himself, manifest in his own shape, which is ours also!—all the time learning that her imagination could never—not to say originate, but, when presented, receive into it the unspeakable excess of his loveliness, of his absolute devotion and tenderness to the creatures, the children of his father!

In the absence of Miss Carmichael she had thought with less oppression of many things that in her presence appeared ghastly-hopeless; now in the prospect of her reappearance she began to feel wicked in daring a thought of her own concerning the God that was nearer to her than her thoughts! Such an unhealthy mastery had she gained over her! What if they met Donal, and she saw her smile to him as she always did now! One thing she was determined upon—and herein lay the pledge of her coming freedom!—that she would not behave to him in the least otherwise than her wont. If she would be worthy, she must be straightforward!

Donal and she had never had any further talk, much as she would have liked it, upon things poetic. As a matter of supposed duty—where she had got the idea I do not know—certainly not from Miss Carmichael, seeing she approved of little poetry but that of Young, Cowper, Pollok, and James Montgomery—she had been reading the *Paradise Lost*, and wished much to speak of it to Donal, but had not the courage.

When Miss Carmichael came, she at once perceived a difference in her, and it set her thinking. She was not one to do or say anything without thinking over it first. She had such a thorough confidence in her judgment, and such a pleasure in exercising it, that she almost always rejected an impulse. Judgment was on the throne; feeling under the footstool. There was something in Arctura's carriage which reminded her of the only time when she had stood upon her rank with her. This was once she made a remark disparaging a favourite dog: for the animals Arctura could brave even her spiritual nightmare: they were not under the wrath and curse like men and women, therefore might be defended! She had on that occasion shown so much offence that Miss Carmichael saw, if she was to keep her influence over her, she must avoid rousing the phantom of rank in defence of prejudice. She was now therefore careful—said next to nothing, but watched her keenly, and not the less slyly that she looked her straight in the face. There is an effort to see into the soul of others that is essentially treacherous; wherever, friendship being the ostensible bond, inquiry outruns regard, it is

treachery—an endeavour to grasp more than the friend would knowingly give.

They went for a little walk in the grounds; as they returned they met Donal going out with Davie. Arctura and Donal passed with a bow and a friendly smile; Davie stopped and spoke to the ladies, then bounded after his friend.

"Have you attended the scripture-lesson regularly?" asked Miss Carmichael.

"Yes; I have been absent only once, I think, since you left," replied Arctura.

"Good, my dear! *You* have not been leaving your lamb to the wolf!"

"I begin to doubt if he be a wolf."

"Ah! does he wear his sheepskin so well? Are you sure he is not plotting to devour sheep and shepherd together?" said Miss Carmichael, with an open glance of search.

"Don't you think," suggested Arctura, "when you are not able to say anything, it would be better not to be present? Your silence looks like agreement."

"But you can always protest! You can assert he is all wrong. You can say you do not in the least agree with him!"

"But what if you are not sure that you do not agree with him?"

"I thought as much!" said Miss Carmichael to herself. "I might have foreseen this!"—Here she spoke.—"If you are not sure you do agree, you can say, 'I can't say I agree with you!' I is always safer to admit little than much."

"I do not quite follow you. But speaking of little and much, I am sure I want a greal deal more than I know yet to save me. I have never yet heard what seems enough."

"Is that to say God has not done his part?"

"No; it is only to say that I hope he has done more than I have yet heard."

"More than send his son to die for your sins?"

"More than you say that means."

"You have but to believe Christ did so."

"I don't know that he died for *my* sins."

"He died for the sins of the whole world."

"Then I must be saved!"

"Yes, if you believe that he made atonement for your sins."

"Then I cannot be saved except I believe that I shall be saved. And I cannot believe I shall be saved until I know I shall be saved!"

"You are cavilling, Arctura! Ah, this is what you have been learning of Mr. Grant! I ought not to have gone away!"

"Nothing of the sort!" said Arctura, drawing herself up a little. "I am sorry if I have said anything wrong; but really I can get hold of nothing! I feel sometimes as if I should go out of my mind."

"Arctura, I have done my best for you! If you think you have found a better teacher, no warning, I fear, will any longer avail!"

"If I did think I had found a better teacher, no warning certainly would; I am only afraid I have not. But of one thing I am sure—that the things Mr. Grant teaches are much more to be desired than——"

"By the unsanctified heart, no doubt!" said Sophia.

"The unsanctified heart," rejoined Arctura, astonished at her own boldness, and the sense of power and freedom growing in her as she spoke, "surely needs God as much as the sanctified! But can the heart be altogether unsanctified that desires to find God so beautiful and good that it can worship him with its whole power of love and adoration? Or is God less beautiful and good than that?"

"We ought to worship God whatever he is."

"But could we love him with all our hearts if he were not altogether lovable?"

"He might not be the less to be worshipped though he seemed so to us. We must worship his justice as much as his love, his power as much as his justice."

Arctura returned no answer; the words had fallen on her heart like an ice-berg. She was not, however, so utterly overwhelmed by them as she would have been some time before; she thought with herself, "I will ask Mr. Grant! I am sure *he* does not think like that! Worship power as much as love! I begin to think she does not understand what she is talking about! If I were to make a creature needing all my love to make life endurable to him, and then not be kind enough to him, should I not be cruel? Would I not be to blame? Can God be God and do anything conceivably to blame—anything that is not altogether beautiful? She tells me we cannot judge what it would be right for God to do by what it would be right for us to do: if what seems right to me is not right to God, I must wrong my conscience and be a sinner in order to serve him! Then my conscience is not the voice of God in me! How then am I made in his image? What does it mean? Ah, but that image has been defaced by the fall! So I cannot tell a bit what God is like? Then how am I to love him? I never can love him! I am very miserable! I am not God's child!"

Thus, long after Miss Carmichael had taken a coldly sorrowful farewell of her, Arctura went round and round the old mill-horse track of her self-questioning: God was not to be trusted in until she had done something she could not do, upon which he would take her into his favour, and then she could trust him! What a God to give all her heart to, to long for, to dream of being at home with! Then she compared Miss Carmichael and Donal Grant, and thought whether Donal might not be as likely to be right as she. Oh, where was assurance, where was certainty about anything! How was she ever to *know?* What if the thing she came to know for certain should be—a God she could not love!

The next day was Sunday. Davie and his tutor overtook her going home from church. It came as of itself to her lips, and she said,

"Mr. Grant, how are we to know what God is like?"

"'Philip saith unto him, Lord, show us the Father and it sufficeth us. Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? He that hath seen me hath seen the father, and how sayest thou then, Show us the father?'"

Thus answered Donal, without a word of his own, and though the three walked side by side, it was ten minutes before another was spoken. Then at last said Arctura,

"If I could but see Christ!"

"It is not necessary to see him to know what he is like. You can read what those who knew him said he was like; that is the first step to understanding him, which is the true seeing; the second is, doing what he tells you: when you understand him—there is your God!"

From that day Arctura's search took a new departure. It is strange how often one may hear a thing, yet never have really heard it! The heart can hear only what it is capable of hearing; therefore "the times of this ignorance God winked at;" but alas for him who will not hear what he *is* capable of hearing!

His failure to get word or even sight of Eppy, together with some uneasiness at the condition in which her grandfather continued, induced lord Forgue to accept the invitation—which his father had taken pains to have sent him—to spend three weeks or a month with a relative in the north of England. He would gladly have sent a message to Eppy before he went, but had no one he could trust with it: Davie was too much under the influence of his tutor! So he departed without sign, and Eppy soon imagined he had deserted her. For a time her tears flowed yet more freely, but by and by she began to feel something of

relief in having the matter settled, for she could not see how they were ever to be married. She would have been content to love him always, she said to herself, were there no prospect of marriage, or even were there no marriage in question; but would he continue to care for her love? She did not think she could expect that. So with many tears she gave him up—or thought she did. He *had* loved her, and that was a grand thing!

There was much that was good, and something that was wise in the girl, notwithstanding her folly in allowing such a lover. The temptation was great: even if his attentions were in their nature but transient, they were sweet while they passed. I doubt if her love was of the deepest she had to give; but who can tell? A woman will love where a man can see nothing lovely. So long as she is able still to love, she is never quite to be pitied; but when the reaction comes—?

So the dull days went by.

But for lady Arctura a great hope had begun to dawn—the hope, namely, that the world was in the hand, yea in the heart of One whom she herself might one day see, in her inmost soul, and with clearest eyes, to be Love itself—not a love she could not care for, but the very heart, generating centre, embracing circumference, and crown of all loves.

Donal prayed to God for lady Arctura, and waited. Her hour was not yet come, but was coming! Everyone that is ready the Father brings to Jesus: the disciple is not greater than his master, and must not think to hasten the hour, or lead one who is not yet taught of God; he must not be miserable about another as if God had forgotten him. Strange helpers of God we shall be, if, thinking to do his work, we act as if he were neglecting it! To wait for God, believing it his one design to redeem his creatures, ready to put the hand to, the moment his hour strikes, is the faith fit for a fellow-worker with him!

CHAPTER XXXIX.

THE CASTLE-ROOF.

ONE stormy Friday night in the month of March, when a bitter east wind was blowing, Donal, seated at the plain deal-table he had got Mrs. Brookes to find him that he might use it regardless of ink, was drawing upon it a diagram, in quest of a simplification for Davie, when a sudden sense of cold made him cast a glance at his fire. He had been aware that it was sinking, but, as there was no fuel in the room, had forgotten it again: it was very low, and he must at once fetch both wood and coal! In certain directions and degrees of wind this was rather a ticklish task; but he had taken the precaution of putting up here and there a bit of rope. Closing the door behind him to keep in what warmth he might, and ascending the stairs a few feet higher, he stepped out on the bartizan, and so round the tower to the roof. There he stood for a moment to look about him.

It was a moonlit night, so far as the clouds, blown in huge and almost continuous masses over the heavens, would permit the light of the moon to emerge. The roaring of the sea came like a low rolling mist across the flats. The air gloomed and darkened and lightened again around him, as the folds of the cloud-blanket overhead were torn, or dropped trailing, or gathered again in the arms of the hurrying wind. As he stood, it seemed suddenly to change, and take a touch of south in its blowing. The same instant came to his ear a loud wail: it was the ghost-music! There was in it the cry of a discord, mingling with a wild rolling change of harmonies. He stood "like one forbid," and listened with all his power. It came again, and again, and was more continuous than he had ever heard it before. Here was now a chance indeed of tracing it home! As a gaze-hound with his eyes, as a sleuth-hound with his nose, he stood ready to start hunting with his listing listening ear. The seeming approach and recession of the sounds might be occasioned by changes in their strength, not by any change of position!

"It must come from somewhere on the roof!" he said, and setting down the pail he had brought, he got on his hands and knees, first to escape the wind in his ears, and next to diminish its hold on his person. Over roof after roof he crept like a cat, stopping to listen every time a new gush of the sound came, then starting afresh in the search for its source. Upon a great gathering

of roofs like these, erected at various times on various levels, and with all kinds of architectural accommodations of one part to another, sound would be variously deflected, and as difficult to trace as inside the house! Careless of cold or danger, he persisted, creeping up, creeping down, over flat leads, over sloping slates, over great roofing stones, along low parapets, and round ticklish corners—following the sound ever, as a cat a flitting unconscious bird: when it ceased, he would keep slowly on in the direction last chosen. Sometimes, when the moon was more profoundly obscured, he would have to stop altogether, unable to get a peep of his way.

On one such occasion, when it was nearly pitch-dark, and the sound had for some time ceased, he was crouching upon a high-pitched roof of great slabs, his fingers clutched around the edges of one of them, and his mountaineering habits standing him in good stead, protected a little from the force of the blast by a huge stack of chimneys that rose to windward: while he clung thus waiting—louder than he had yet heard it, almost in his very ear, arose the musical ghost-cry—this time like that of a soul in torture. The moon came out, as at the cry, to see, but Donal could spy nothing to suggest its origin. As if disappointed, the moon instantly withdrew, the darkness again fell, and the wind rushed upon him full of keen slanting rain, as if with fierce intent of protecting the secret: there was little chance of success that night! he must break off the hunt till daylight! If there was any material factor in the sound, he would be better able to discover it then! By the great chimney-stack he could identify the spot where he had been nearest to it! There remained for the present but the task of finding his way back to his tower.

A difficult task it was—more difficult than he anticipated. He had not an idea in what direction his tower lay—had not an idea of the track, if track it could be called, by which he had come. One thing only was clear—it was somewhere else than where he was. He set out therefore, like any honest pilgrim who knows only he must go somewhere else, and began his wanderings. He found himself far more obstructed than in coming. Again and again he could go no farther in the direction he was trying, again and again had to turn and try another. It was half-an-hour at least before he came to a spot he knew, and by that time, with the rain the wind had fallen a little. Against a break in the clouds he saw the outline of one of his store-sheds, and his way was thenceforward plain. He caught up his pail, filled it with coal and wood, and hastened to his nest as quickly as cramped joints would carry him, hopeless almost of finding his fire still alive.

But when he reached the stair, and had gone down a few steps, he saw a strange sight: below him, at his door, with a small wax-taper in her hand, stood the form of a woman, in the posture of one who had just knocked, and was hearkening for an answer. So intent was she, and so loud was the wind among the roofs, that she had not heard his step, and he stood a moment afraid to speak lest he should startle her. Presently she knocked again. He made an attempt at ventriloquy, saying in a voice to sound farther off than it was, "Come in." A hand rose to the latch, and opened the door. By the hand he knew it was lady Arctura.

"Welcome to the stormy sky, my lady!" he said, as he entered the room after her—a pleasant object after his crawling excursion!

She started a little at his voice behind her, and turning was more startled still.

Donal was more like a chimney-sweep than a tutor in a lord's castle. He was begrimed and blackened from head to foot, and carried a pailful of coals and wood. Reading readily her look, he made haste to explain.

"I have been on the roof for the last hour," he said.

"What were you doing there," she asked, with a strange mingling of expressions, "in such a night?"

"I heard the music, my lady—the ghost-music, you know, that haunts the castle, and——"

I heard it too," she murmured, with a look almost of terror. "I have often heard it before, but never so loud as to-night. Have you any notion about it, Mr. Grant?"

"None whatever—except that I am nearly sure it comes from somewhere about the roof."

"If you could clear up the mystery!"

"I have some hope of it.—You are not frightened, my lady?"

She had caught hold of the back of a chair.

"Do sit down. I will get you some water."

"No, no; I shall be right in a moment!" she answered. "Your stair has taken my breath away. But my uncle is in such a strange condition that I could not help coming to you."

"I have seen him myself, more than once, very strange."

"Will you come with me?"

"Anywhere."

"Come then."

She left the room, and led the way, by the light of her dim taper, down the stair. About the middle of it, she stopped at a door, and turning said, with a smile like that of a child, and the first untroubled look Donal had yet seen upon her face—

"How delightful it is to be taken out of fear! I am not the least afraid now!"

"I am very glad," said Donal. "I should like to kill fear; it is the shadow that follows at the heels of wrong.—Do you think the music has anything to do with your uncle's condition?"

"I do not know."

She turned again hastily, and passing through the door, entered a part of the house with which Donal had no acquaintance. With many bewildering turns, she led him to the great staircase, down which she continued her course. The house was very still: it must surely be later than he had thought—only there were so few servants in it for its extent! His guide went very fast, with a step light as a bird's: at one moment he had all but lost sight of her in the great curve. At the room in which Donal first saw the earl, she stopped.

The door was open, but there was no light within. She led him across to the door of the little chamber behind. A murmur, but no light, came from it. In a moment it was gone, and the deepest silence filled the world. Arctura entered. One step within the door she stood still, and held high her taper. Donal looked in sideways.

A small box was on the floor against the foot of the farthest wall, and on the box, in a long dressing gown of rich faded stuff, the silk and gold in which shone feebly in the dim light, stood the tall meagre form of the earl, with his back to the door, his face to the wall, close to it, and his arms and hands stretched out against it, like one upon a cross. He stood without moving a muscle or uttering a sound. What could it mean? Donal gazed in a blank dismay.

Not a minute had passed, though it was to him a long and painful time, when the murmuring came again. He listened as to a voice from another world—a thing terrible to those whose fear dwells in another world. But to Donal it was terrible as a voice from no other world could have been; it came from an unseen world of sin and suffering—a world almost a negation of the eternal, a world of darkness and the shadow of death. But surely there was hope for that world yet!—for whose were the words in which its indwelling despair grew audible?

"And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds; but this man hath done nothing amiss!"

Again the silence fell, but the form did not move, and still they stood regarding him.

From far away came the sound of the ghost-music. The head against the wall began to move as if waking from sleep. The

hands sank along the wall and fell by the sides. The earl gave a deep sigh, but still stood leaning his forehead against the wall.

Arctura turned, and they left the room.

She went down the stair, and on to the library. Its dark oak cases and old bindings reflected hardly a ray of the poor taper she carried; but the fire was not yet quite out. She set down the light, and looked at Donal in silence.

"What does it all mean?" he asked in a hoarse whisper.

"God knows!" she returned solemnly.

"Are we safe?" he asked. "May he not come here?"

"I do not think he will. I have seen him in many parts of the house, but never here."

Even as she spoke the door swung noiselessly open, and the earl entered. His face was ghastly pale; his eyes were wide open; he came straight towards them. But he did not see them; or if he did, he saw them but as phantoms of the dream in which he was walking—phantoms which had not yet become active in the dream. He drew a chair to the embers, in his fancy doubtless a great fire, sat for a moment or two gazing into them, rose, went the whole length of the room, took down a book, returned with it to the fire, drew towards him Arctura's tiny taper, opened the book, and began to read in an audible murmur. Donal, trying afterwards to recall and set down what he had heard, wrote nothing better than this:—

In the heart of the earth-cave
Lay the king.
Through chancel and choir and nave
The bells ring.

Said the worm at his side,
Sweet fool,
Turn to thy bride;
Is the night so cool?
Wouldst thou lie like a stone till the aching morn
Out of the dark be born?

Heavily pressed the night enorm,
But he heard the voice of the worm,
Like the sound of a muttered thunder low,
In the realms where no feet go.

And he said, I will rise,
I will will myself glad;
I will open my eyes,
And no more sleep sad.

For who is a god
But the man who can spring
Up from the sod,
And be his own king?

I will model my gladness,
Dig my despair—
And let goodness or badness
Be folly's own care!

I will be content,
And the world shall spin round
Till its force be outspent.
It shall drop
Like a top
Spun by a boy,
While I sit in my tent,
In a featureless joy—
Sit without sound,
And toss up my world,
Till it burst and be drowned
In the blackness upcurled
From the deep hell-ground.

The dreams of a god
Are the worlds of his slaves:
I will be my own god,
And rule my own knaves!

He went on in this way for some minutes; then the rimes grew less perfect, and the utterance sank into measured prose. The tone of the speaker showed that he took the stuff for glowing verse, and regarded it as embodying his own present consciousness. One might have thought the worm would have a word to say in rejoinder; but no; the worm had vanished, and the buried dreamer had made himself a god—his own god! Donal stole up softly behind him, and peeped at the open book: it was the *Novum Organum!*

They glided out of the room, and left the dreamer to his dreams.

"Do you think," said Donal, "I ought to tell Simmons?"

"It would be better. Do you know where to find him?"

"I do not."

"I will show you a bell that rings in his room. He will think his lordship has rung it."

They went and rang the bell. In a minute or two they heard the steps of the faithful servant seeking his master, and bade each other good-night.

CHAPTER XL.

A RELIGION-LESSON.

In the morning Donal learned from Simmons that his master was very ill—could not raise his head.

"The way he do moan and cry!" said Simmons. "You would think sure he was either out of his mind, or had something heavy upon it! All the years I known him, he been like that every now an' then, and back to his old self again, little the worse! Only the fits do come oftener."

Towards the close of school, as Donal was beginning to give his lesson in religion, lady Arctura entered, and sat down beside Davie.

"What would you think of me, Davie," Donal was saying, "if I were angry with you because you did not know something I had never taught you?"

Davie only laughed. It was to him a grotesque, an impossible supposition.

"If," Donal resumed, "I were to show you a proposition of Euclid which you had never seen before, and say to you, 'Now, Davie, this is one of the most beautiful of all Euclid's propositions, and you must immediately admire it, and admire Euclid for constructing it!'—what would you say?"

Davie thought, and looked puzzled.

"But you wouldn't do it, sir!" he said. "—I know you wouldn't do it!" he added, after a moment.

"Why should I not?"

"It isn't your way, sir."

"But suppose I were to take that way?"

"You would not then be like yourself, sir!"

"Tell me how I should be unlike myself. Think."

"You would not be reasonable."

"What would you say to me?"

"I should say, 'Please, sir, let me learn the proposition first, and then I shall be able to admire it. I don't know it yet!'"

"Very good!—Now again, suppose, when you tried to learn it, you were not able to do so, and therefore could see no beauty in it—should I blame you?"

"No, sir; I am sure you would not—because I should not be to blame, and it would not be fair; and you never do what is not fair!"

"I am glad you think so: I try to be fair.—That looks as if you believed in me, Davie!"

"Of course I do, sir!"

"Why?"

"Just because you are fair."

"Suppose, Davie, I said to you, 'Here is a very beautiful thing I should like you to learn,' and you, after you had partly learned it, were to say 'I don't see anything beautiful in this: I am afraid I never shall!'—would that be to believe in me?"

"No, surely, sir! for you know best what I am able for."

"Suppose you said, 'I daresay it is all as good as you say, but I don't care to take so much trouble about it,'—what would that be?"

"Not to believe in you, sir. You would not want me to learn a thing that was not worth my trouble, or a thing I should not be glad of knowing when I did know it."

"Suppose you said, 'Sir, I don't doubt what you say, but I am so tired, I don't mean to do anything more you tell me,'—would you then be believing in me?"

"No. That might be to believe your word, but it would not be to trust you. It would be to think my thinks better than your thinks, and that would be no faith at all."

Davie had at times an oddly childish way of putting things.

"Suppose you were to say nothing, but go away and do nothing of what I told you—what would that be?"

"Worse and worse; it would be sneaking."

"One question more: what is faith—the big faith I mean—not the little faith between equals—the big faith we put in one above us?"

"It is to go at once and do the thing he tells us to do."

"If we don't, then we haven't faith in him?"

"No; certainly not."

"But might not that be his fault?"

"Yes—if he was not good—and so I could not trust him. If he said I was to do one kind of thing, and he did another kind of thing himself, then of course I could not have faith in him."

"And yet you might feel you must do what he told you!"

"Yes."

"Would that be faith in him?"

"No."

"Would you always do what he told you?"

"Not if he told me to do what it would be wrong to do."

"Now tell me, Davie, what is the biggest faith of all—the faith to put in the one only altogether good person."

"You mean God, Mr. Grant?"

"Whom else could I mean?"

"You might mean Jesus."

"They are one; they mean always the same thing, do always the same thing, always agree. There is only one thing they don't do the same in—they do not love the same person."

"What *do* you mean, Mr. Grant?" interrupted Arctura.

She had been listening intently: was the cloven foot of Mr. Grant's heresy now at last about to appear plainly?

"I mean this," answered Donal, with a smile that seemed to Arctura such a light as she had never seen on human face, "—that God loves Jesus, not God; and Jesus loves God, not Jesus. We love one another, not ourselves—don't we, Davie?"

"*You* do, Mr. Grant," answered Davie modestly.

"Now tell me, Davie, what is the great big faith of all—that which we have to put in the Father of us, who is as good not only as thought can think, but as good as heart can wish—infinitely better than anybody but Jesus Christ can think—what is the faith to put in him?"

"Oh, it is everything!" answered Davie.

"But what first?" asked Donal.

"First, it is to do what he tells us."

"Yes, Davie: it is to learn his problems by going and doing his will; not trying to understand things first, but trying first to do things. We must spread out our arms to him as a child does to his mother when he wants her to take him; then when he sets us down, saying, 'Go and do this or that,' we must make all the haste in us to go and do it. And when we get hungry to see him, we must look at his picture."

"Where is that, sir?"

"Ah, Davie, Davie! don't you know that yet? Don't you know that, besides being himself, and just because he is himself, Jesus is the living picture of God?"

"I know, sir! We have to go and read about him in the book."

"May I ask you a question, Mr. Grant?" said Arctura.

"With perfect freedom," answered Donal. "I only hope I may be able to answer it."

"When we read about Jesus, we have to draw for ourselves his likeness from words, and you know what kind of a likeness the best artist would make that way, who had never seen with his own eyes the person whose portrait he had to paint!"

"I understand you quite," returned Donal. "Some go to other men to draw it for them; and some go to others to hear

from them what they must draw—thus getting all their blunders in addition to those they must make for themselves. But the nearest likeness you can see of him, is the one drawn by yourself while doing what he tells you. He has promised to come into those who keep his word. He will then be much nearer to them than in bodily presence; and such may well be able to draw for themselves the likeness of God.—But first of all, and before everything else, mind, Davie, OBEDIENCE!"

"Yes, Mr. Grant; I know," said Davie.

"Then off with you! Only think sometimes it is God who gave you your game."

"I'm going to fly my kite, Mr. Grant."

"Do. God likes to see you fly your kite, and it is all in his March wind it flies. It could not go up a foot but for that."

Davie went.

"You have heard that my uncle is very ill to-day!" said Arctura.

"I have. Poor man!" replied Donal.

"He must be in a very peculiar condition."

"Of body and mind both. He greatly perplexes me."

"You would be quite as much perplexed if you had known him as long as I have! Never since my father's death, which seems a century ago, have I felt safe; never in my uncle's presence at ease. I get no nearer to him. It seems to me, Mr. Grant, that the cause of discomfort and strife is never that we are too near others, but that we are not near enough."

This was a remark after Donal's own heart.

"I understand you," he said, "and entirely agree with you."

"I never feel that my uncle cares for me except as one of the family, and the holder of its chief property. He would have liked me better, perhaps, if I had been dependent on him."

"How long will he be your guardian?" asked Donal.

"He is no longer my guardian legally. The time set by my father's will ended last year. I am three and twenty, and my own mistress. But of course it is much better to have the head of the house with me. I wish he were a little more like other people!—But tell me about the ghost-music: we had not time to talk of it last night!"

"I got pretty near the place it came from. But the wind blew so, and it was so dark, that I could do nothing more then."

"You will try again?"

"I shall indeed."

"I am afraid, if you find a natural cause for it, I shall be a little sorry."

"How can there be any other than a natural cause, my lady? God and Nature are one. God is the causing Nature.—Tell me, is not the music heard only in stormy nights, or at least nights with a good deal of wind?"

"I *have* heard it in the daytime!"

"On a still day?"

"I think not. I think too I never heard it on a still summer night."

"Do you think it comes in all storms?"

"I think not."

"Then perhaps it has something to do not merely with the wind, but with the direction of the wind!"

"Perhaps. I cannot say."

"That might account for the uncertainty of its visits! The instrument may be accessible, yet its converse with the operating power so rare that it has not yet been discovered. It is a case in which experiment is not permitted us: we cannot make a wind blow, neither can we vary the direction of the wind blowing; observation alone is left us, and that can be only at such times when the sound is heard."

"Then you can do nothing till the music comes again?"

"I think I can do something now; for, last night I seemed so near the place whence the sounds were coming, that the eye may now be able to supplement the ear, and find the music-bird silent on her nest. If the wind fall, as I think it will in the afternoon, I shall go again and see whether I can find anything. I noticed last night that simultaneously with the sound came a change in the wind—towards the south, I think.—What a night it was after I left you!"

"I think," said Arctura, "the wind has something to do with my uncle's fits. Was there anything very strange about it last night? When the wind blows so angrily, I always think of that passage about the prince of the power of the air being the spirit that works in the children of disobedience. Tell me what it means."

"I do not know what it means," answered Donal; "but I suppose the epithet involves a symbol of the difference between the wind of God that inspires the spiritual true self of man, and the wind of the world that works by thousands of impulses and influences in the lower, the selfish self of children that will not obey. I will look at the passage and see what I can make out of it. Only the spiritual and the natural blend so that we may one day be astonished!—Would you like to join the music-hunt, my lady?"

"Do you mean, go on the roof? Should I be able?"

"I would not have you go in the night, and the wind blowing," said Donal with a laugh; "but you can come and see, and judge for yourself. The bartizan is the only anxious place, but as I mean to take Davie with me, you may think I do not count it very dangerous!"

"Will it be safe for Davie?"

"I can venture more with Davie than with another: he obeys in a moment."

"I will obey too if you will take me," said Arctura.

"Then, please, come to the schoolroom at four o'clock. But we shall not go except the wind be fallen."

When Davie heard what his tutor proposed, he was filled with the restlessness of anticipation. Often while helping Donal with his fuel, he had gazed up at him on the roof with longing eyes, but Donal had never let him go upon it.

CHAPTER XLI.

THE MUSIC-NEST.

THE hour came, and with the very stroke of the clock, lady Arctura and Davie were in the schoolroom. A moment more, and they set out to climb the spiral of Baliol's tower.

But what a different lady was Arctura this afternoon! She was cheerful, even merry—with Davie, almost jolly. Her soul had many alternating lights and glooms, but it was seldom or never now so clouded as when first Donal saw her. In the solitude of her chamber, where most the simple soul should be conscious of life as a blessedness, she was yet often haunted by ghastly shapes of fear; but there also other forms had begun to draw nigh to her; sweetest rays of hope would ever and anon break through the clouds, and mock the darkness from her presence. Perhaps God might mean as thoroughly well by her as even her imagination could wish!

Does a dull reader remark that hers was a diseased state of mind?—I answer, The more she needed to be saved from it with the only real deliverance from any ill! But her misery, however diseased, was infinitely more reasonable than the healthy joy of such as trouble themselves about nothing. Some sicknesses are better than any but the true health.

"I never thought you were like this, Arkie!" said Davie. "You are just as if you had come to school to Mr. Grant! You would soon know how much happier it is to have somebody you must mind!"

"If having me, Davie," said Donal, "doesn't help you to be happy without me, there will not have been much good done. What I want most to teach you is, to leave the door always on the latch, for some one—you know whom I mean—to come in."

"Race me up the stair, Arkie," said Davie, when they came to the foot of the spiral.

"Very well," assented his cousin.

"Which side will you have—the broad or the narrow?"

"The broad."

"Well then—one, two, three, and away we go!"

Davie mounted like a clever goat, his hand and arm on the newel, and slipping lightly round it. Arctura's ascent was easier but slower: she found her garments in her way, therefore yielded the race, and waited for Donal. Davie, thinking he heard her footsteps behind him all the time, flew up shrieking with the sweet terror of love's pursuit.

"What a darling the boy has grown!" said Arctura when Donal overtook her.

"Yes," answered Donal; "one would think such a child might run straight into the kingdom of heaven; but I suppose he must have his temptations and trials first: out of the storm alone comes the true peace."

"Will peace come out of all storms?"

"I trust so. Every pain and every fear, every doubt is a cry after God. What mother refuses to go to her child because he is only crying—not calling her by name!"

"Oh, if I could but believe so about God! For if it be all right with God—I mean if God be such a God as to be loved with the heart and soul of loving, then all is well. Is it not, Mr. Grant?"

"Indeed it is!—And you are not far from the kingdom of heaven," he was on the point of saying, but did not—because she was in it already, only unable yet to verify the things around her, like the man who had but half-way received his sight.

When they reached the top, he took them past his door, and higher up the stair to the next, opening on the bartizan. Here he said lady Arctura must come with him first, and Davie must wait till he came back for him. When he had them both safe on the roof, he told Davie to keep close to his cousin or himself all the time. He showed them first his stores of fuel—his ammuni-

tion, he said, for fighting the winter. Next he pointed out where he stood when first he heard the music the night before, and set down his bucket to follow it; and where he found the bucket, blown thither by the wind, when he came back to feel for it in the dark. Then he began to lead them, as nearly as he could, the way he had then gone, but with some, for Arctura's sake, desirable detours: over one steep-sloping roof they had to cross, he found a little stair up the middle, and down the other side.

They came to a part where he was not quite sure about the way. As he stopped to bethink himself, they turned and looked eastward. The sea was shining in the sun, and the flat wet country between was so bright that they could not tell where the land ended and the sea began. But as they gazed a great cloud came over the sun, the sea turned cold and gray as death—a true March sea, and the land lay low and desolate between. The spring was gone and the winter was there. A gust of wind, full of keen hail, drove sharp in their faces.

"Ah, that settles the question!" said Donal. "The music-bird must wait. We will call upon her another day.—It is funny, isn't it, Davie, to go a bird's-nesting after music on the roof of a house?"

"Hark!" said Arctura; "I think I heard the music-bird!—She wants us to find her nest! I really don't think we ought to go back for a little blast of wind, and a few pellets of hail! What do you think, Davie?"

"Oh, for me, I wouldn't turn for ever so big a storm!" said Davie; "but you know, Arkie, it's not you or me, Arkie! Mr. Grant is the captain of this expedition, and we must do as he bids us."

"Oh, surely, Davie! I never meant to dispute that. Only Mr. Grant is not a tyrant; he will let a lady say what she thinks!"

"Oh, yes, or a boy either! He likes *me* to say what I think! He says we can't get at each other without. And do you know—he obeys me sometimes!"

Arctura glanced a keen question at the boy.

"It is quite true!" said Davie, while Donal listened smiling. "Last winter, for days together—not all day, you know: I had to obey him most of the time! but at certain times, I was as sure of Mr. Grant doing as I told him, as he is now of me doing as he tells me."

"What times were those?" asked Arctura, thinking to hear of some odd pedagogic device.

"When I was teaching him to skate!" answered Davie, in a triumph of remembrance. "He said I knew better than he

there, and so he would obey me. You wouldn't believe how splendidly he did it, Arkie—*out and out!*" concluded Davie, in a tone almost of awe.

"Oh, yes, I would believe it—perfectly!" said Arctura.

Donal suddenly threw an arm round each of them, and pulled them down sitting. The same instant a fierce blast burst upon the roof. He had seen the squall whitening the sea, and looking nearer home saw the tops of the trees between streaming level towards the castle. But seated they were in no danger.

"Hark!" said Arctura again; "there it is!"

They all heard the wailing cry of the ghost-music. But while the blast continued they dared not pursue their hunt. It kept on in fits and gusts till the squall ceased—as suddenly almost as it had burst. The sky cleared, and the sun shone as a March sun can. But the blundering blasts and the swan-shot of the flying hail were all about still.

"When the storm is upon us," remarked Donal, as they rose from their crouching position, "it seems as if there never could be sunshine more; but our hopelessness does not keep back the sun when his hour to shine is come."

"I understand!" said Arctura: "when one is miserable, misery seems the law of being; and in the midst of it dwells some thought which nothing can ever set right! All at once it is gone, broken up and gone, like that hail-cloud. It just looks its own foolishness and vanishes."

"Do you know why things so often come right?" said Donal. "—I would say *always come right*, but that is matter of faith, not sight."

Arctura did not answer at once.

"I think I know what you are thinking," she said, "but I want to hear you answer your own question."

"Why do things come right so often, do you think, Davie?" repeated Donal.

"Is it," returned Davie, "because they were made right to begin with?"

"There is much in that, Davie; but there is a better reason than that. It is because things are alive, and the life at the heart of them, that which keeps them going, is the great, beautiful God. So the sun for ever returns after the clouds. A doubting man, like him who wrote the book of Ecclesiastes, puts the evil last, and says 'the clouds return after the rain;' but the Christian knows that

> One has mastery
> Who makes the joy the last in every song."

"You speak like one who has suffered!" said Arctura, with a kind look in his face.

"Who has not that lives?"

"It is how you are able to help others!"

"Am I able to help others? I am very glad to hear it. My ambition would be to help, if I had any ambition. But if I am able, it is because I have been helped myself, not because I have suffered."

"Will you tell me what you mean by saying you have no ambition?"

"Where your work is laid out for you, there is no room for ambition: you have got your work to do!—But give me your hand, my lady; put your other hand on my shoulder. You stop there, Davie, and don't move till I come to you. Now, my lady—a little jump! That's it! Now you are safe!—You were not afraid, were you?"

"Not in the least. But did you come here in the dark?"

"Yes. There is this advantage in the dark: you do not see how dangerous the way is. We take the darkness about us for the source of our difficulties: it is a great mistake. Christian would hardly have dared go through the Valley of the Shadow of Death, had he not had the shield of the darkness all about him."

"Can the darkness be a shield? Is it not the evil thing?"

"Yes, the dark that is within us—the dark of distrust and unwillingness, but not the outside dark of mere human ignorance. Where we do not see, we are protected. Where we are most ignorant and most in danger, is in those things that affect the life of God in us: there the Father is every moment watching his child. If he were not constantly pardoning and punishing our sins, what would become of us! We must learn to trust him about our faults as much as about everything else!"

In the earnestness of his talk he had stopped, but now turned and went on.

"There is my land-, or roof-mark rather!" he said, "—that chimney-stack! Close by it I heard the music very near me indeed—when all at once the darkness and the wind came together so thick that I could do nothing more. We shall do better now in the daylight—and three of us instead of one!"

"What a huge block of chimneys!" said Arctura.

"Is it not!" returned Donal. "It indicates the hugeness of the building below us, of which we can see so little. Like the volcanoes of the world, it tells us how much fire is necessary to keep our dwelling warm."

"I thought it was the sun that kept the earth warm," said Davie.

"So it is, but not the sun alone. The earth is like a man: the great glowing fire is God in the heart of the earth, and the great sun is God in the sky, keeping it warm on the other side. Our gladness and pleasure, our trouble when we do wrong, our love for all about us, that is God inside us; and the beautiful things and lovable people, and all the lessons of life in history and poetry, in the Bible, and in whatever comes to us, is God outside of us. Every life is between two great fires of the love of God. So long as we do not give ourselves up heartily to him, we fear his fire will burn us. And burn us it does when we go against its flames and not with them, refusing to burn with the fire with which God is always burning. When we try to put it out, or oppose it, or get away from it, then indeed it burns!"

"I think I know," said Davie.

Arctura held her peace.

"But now," said Donal, "I must go round and have a peep at the other side of the chimney-stack."

He disappeared, and Arctura and Davie stood waiting his return. They looked each in the other's face with the delight of consciously sharing a great adventure. Beyond their feet lay the wide country and the great sea; over them the sky with the sun in it going down towards the mountains; under their feet the mighty old pile that was their home; and under that the earth with its molten heart of fire.

But Davie's look soon changed to one of triumph in his tutor. "Is is not grand," it said, "to be all day with a man like that—talking to you and teaching you?" That at least was how Arctura interpreted it, reading in it almost an assertion of superiority, in as much as this man was his tutor and not hers. She replied to the look in words:—

"I am his pupil, too, Davie," she said, "though Mr. Grant does not know it."

"How can that be," answered Davie, "when you are afraid of him? I am not a bit afraid of him!"

"How do you know I am afraid of him?" she asked.

"Oh, anybody could see that!"

She was afraid she had spoken foolishly, and Davie might repeat her words: she did not desire to hasten further intimacy with Donal; things were going in that direction fast enough! Her eyes, avoiding Davie's, kept reconnoitring the stack of chimneys.

"Aren't you glad to have such a castle all for your own—to

do what you like with, Arkie? You know you could pull it all to pieces if you liked!"

"Would it be less mine," said Arctura, "if I was not at liberty to pull it all to pieces? And would it be more mine when I had pulled it to pieces, Davie?"

Donal was coming round the side of the stack, and heard what she said. It pleased him, for it was not a little in his own style.

"What makes a thing your own, do you think, Davie?" she went on.

"To be able to do with it what you like," replied Davie.

"Whether that be good or bad?"

"Yes, I think so," answered Davie, doubtfully.

"Then I think you are quite wrong," she rejoined. "The moment you begin to use a thing wrong, that moment you make it less yours. I can't quite explain it, but that is how it looks to me."

She ceased, and after a moment Donal took up the question.

"Lady Arctura is quite right, Davie," he said. "The nature, that is the good of a thing, is that only by which it can be possessed. Any other possession is like slave-owning; it is not a righteous having. The right and the power to use it to its true purpose, *and the using it so*, are the conditions that make a thing ours. To have the right and the power, and not use it so, would be to make the thing less ours than anybody's.—Suppose you had a very beautiful picture, but from some defect in your sight you could never see that picture as it really was, while a servant in your house not only saw it as it was meant to be seen, but had such delight in gazing on it, that even in his dreams it came to him, and made him think of things he would not have thought of but for it:—which of you, you or the servant in your house, would have the more real possession of that picture? You could sell it away from yourself, and never know anything about it more; but you could not by all the power of a tyrant take it from your servant."

"Ah, now I understand!" said Davie, with a look at lady Arctura which seemed to say, "You see how Mr. Grant can make me understand!"

"I wonder," said lady Arctura, "what that curious opening in the side of the chimney-stack means! It can't be for smoke to come out at!"

"No," said Donal; "there is not a mark of smoke about it. If it had been meant for that, it would hardly have been put halfway from the top! I can't make it out! A hole like that in any

chimney must surely interfere with the draught! I must get a ladder!"

"Let me climb on your shoulders, Mr. Grant," said Davie.

"Come then; up you go!" said Donal.

And up went Davie, and peeped into the horizontal slit.

"It looks very like a chimney," he said, turning his head and thrusting it in sideways. "It goes right down to somewhere," he added, bringing his head out again, "but there is something across it a little way down—to prevent the jackdaws from tumbling in, I suppose."

"What is it?" asked Donal.

"Something like a grating," answered Davie; "—no, not a grating exactly; it is what you might call a grating, but it seems made of wires. I don't think it would keep a strong bird out if he wanted to get in."

"Aha!" said Donal to himself; "what if those wires be tuned! Did you ever see an aeolian harp, my lady?" he asked: "I never did."

"Yes," answered lady Arctura, "—once, when I was a little girl. And now you suggest it, I think the sounds we hear are not unlike those of an aeolian harp! The strings are all the same length, if I remember. But I do not understand the principle. They seem all to play together, and make the strangest, wildest harmonies, when the wind blows across them in a particular way."

"I fancy then we have found the nest of our music-bird!" said Donal. "The wires Davie speaks of may be the strings of an aeolian harp! I wonder if there could be a draught across them! I must get up and see! I must go and get a ladder!"

"But how *could* there be an aeolian harp up here?" said Arctura.

"It will be time enough to answer that question," replied Donal, "when it changes to, 'How did an aeolian harp get up here?' Something is here that wants accounting for: it *may* be an aeolian harp!"

"But in a chimney! The soot would spoil the strings!"

"Then perhaps it is not a chimney: is there any sign of soot about, Davie?"

"No, sir; there is nothing but clean stone and lime."

"You see, my lady! We do not even know that it is a chimney!"

"What else can it be, standing with the rest?"

"It may have been built for one; but if it had ever been used for one, the marks of smoke would remain, had it been disused ever so long. But to-morrow I will bring up a ladder."

"Could you not do it now?" said Arctura, almost coaxingly. "I should so like to have the thing settled!"

"As you please, my lady! I will go at once. There is one leaning against the garden-wall, not far from the bottom of the tower."

"If you do not mind the trouble!"

"I will come and help," said Davie.

"You mustn't leave lady Arctura. I am not sure if I can get it up the stair; I am afraid it is too long. If I cannot, we will haul it up as we did the coal."

He went, and the cousins sat down to wait his return. It was a cold evening, but Arctura was well wrapt up, and Davie was hardy. The sat at the foot of the chimney-stack, and began to talk.

"It is such a long time since you told me anything, Arkie!" said the boy.

"You do not need me now to tell you anything: you have Mr. Grant! You like him much better than ever you did me!"

"You see," said Davie, thoughtfully, and making no defence against her half-reproach, "he began by making me afraid of him—not that he meant to do it, I think! he only meant that I *should* do what he told me: I was never afraid of you, Arkie!"

"I was much crosser to you than Mr. Grant, I am sure!"

"Mr. Grant is never cross to me; and if ever you were, I've forgotten it, Arkie. I only remember that I was not good to you. I am sorry for it now when I lie awake in bed; but I say to myself you forgive me, and go to sleep."

"What makes you think I forgive you, Davie?"

"Because I love you."

This was not very logical, and set Arctura thinking. She did not forgive the boy because he loved her; but the boy's love to her might make him sure she forgave him! Love is its own justification, and sees itself in all its objects: forgiveness is an essential belonging of love, and must be seen where love is seen.

"Are you fond of my brother?" asked Davie, after a pause.

"Why do you ask me?"

"Because they say you and he are going to be married some day, yet you don't seem to care much to be together."

"It is all nonsense!" replied Arctura, reddening. "I wish people would not talk foolishness!"

"Well, I do think he's not so fond of you as of Eppy!"

"Hush! hush! you must not speak of such things."

"I saw him once kiss Eppy, and I never saw him kiss you!"

"No, indeed!"

"Is it right of Forgue, if he's going to marry you, to kiss Eppy?—That's what I want to know!"

"He is not going to marry me."

"He would, if you told him you wished it. Papa wishes it."

"How do you know that?"

"From many things. Once I heard him say, 'Afterwards, when the house is our own,' and I asked him what he meant, and he said, 'When Forgue marries Arctura, then the castle will be Forgue's. That is how it ought to be, you know! Property and title ought never to be parted.'"

The hot blood rose to Arctura's temples: was she a mere wrappage to her property—the paper of the parcel! But she called to mind how strange her uncle was: but for that could he have been so imprudent as to talk in such a way to a boy whose simplicity rendered the confidence dangerous?

"You would not like having to give away your castle—would you, Arkie?" he went on.

"Not to any one I did not love."

'If I were you, I would not marry, but keep my castle to myself. I don't see why Forgue should have your castle!"

"You think I should make my castle my husband?"

"He would be a good big husband anyhow, and a strong—one to defend you from your enemies, and not talk to you when you wanted to be quiet."

"That is all true; but one might get weary of a stupid husband, however big and strong he was."

"There's another thing, though!—he wouldn't be a cruel husband! I've heard papa often speak about some cruel husband! I fancied sometimes he meant himself; but that could not be, you know."

Arctura made no reply. All but vanished memories of things she had heard, hints and signs here and there that all was not right between her uncle and aunt, vaguely returned: could it be that he now repented of harshness to his wife, that the thought of it was preying upon him, that it drove him to his drugs for forgetfulness?—But in the presence of the boy she could not go on thinking in such a direction about his father. She felt relieved by the return of Donal.

He had found it rather difficult to get the ladder round the sharp curves of the stair; but at last they saw him with it on his shoulder coming over a distant roof.

"Now we shall see!" he said, as he leaned it up against the chimney, and stood panting.

"You have tired yourself!" said lady Arctura.

"Where's the harm, my lady? A man must get tired a few times before he lies down!" rejoined Donald lightly.

Said Davie,

"Must a woman, Mr. Grant, marry a man she does not love?"

"No, certainly, Davie."

"Mr. Grant," said Arctura, in dread of what Davie might say next, "what do you take to be the duty of one inheriting a property? Ought a woman to get rid of it, or attend to it herself?"

Donal thought a little.

"We must first settle the main duty of property," he said; "and that I am hardly prepared to do."

"Is there not a duty owing to your family?"

"There are a thousand duties owing to your family."

"I don't mean those you are living with merely, but those also who transmitted the property to you. This property belongs to my family rather than to me, and if I had had a brother it would have gone to him: should I not do better for the family by giving it up to the next heir? I am not disinterested in starting the question; possession and power are of no great importance in my eyes; they are hindrances to me."

"It seems to me," said Donal, "that the fact that you would not have succeeded had there been a son, points to the fact of a disposer of events: you were sent into the world to take the property. If so, God expects you to perform the duties of it; they are not to be got rid of by throwing the thing aside, or giving them to another to do for you. If your family and not God were the real giver of the property, the question you put might arise; but I should hardly take interest enough in it to be capable of discussing it. I understand my duty to my sheep or cattle, to my master, to my father or mother, to my brother or sister, to my pupil Davie here; I owe my ancestors love and honour, and the keeping of their name unspotted, though that duty is forestalled by a higher; but as to the property they leave behind them, over which they have no more power, and which now I trust they never think about, I do not see what obligation I can be under to them with regard to it, other than is comprised in the duties of the property itself."

"But a family is not merely those that are gone before; there are those that will come after!"

"The best thing for those to come after, is to receive the property with its duties performed, with the light of righteousness radiating from it."

"But what then do you call the duties of property?"

"In what does the property consist?'

"In land, to begin with."

"If the land were of no value, would the possession of it involve duties?".

"I suppose not."

"In what does the value of the land consist?"

Lady Arctura did not attempt an answer to the question, and Donal, after a little pause, resumed.

"If you valued things as the world values them, I should not care to put the question; but I fear you may have some lingering notion that, though God's way is the true way, the world's way must not be disregarded. One thing, however, is certain—that nothing that is against God's way can be true. The value of property consists only in its being means, ground, or material to work his will withal. There is no success in the universe but in his will being done."

Arctura was silent. She had inherited prejudices which, while she hated selfishness, were yet thoroughly selfish. Such are of the evils in us hardest to get rid of. They are even cherished for a lifetime by some of the otherwise loveliest of souls. Knowing that herein much thought would be necessary for her, and that she would think, Donal went no farther: a house must have its foundation settled before it is built upon; argument where the grounds of it are at all in dispute is worse than useless.

He turned to his ladder, set it right, mounted, and peered into the opening. At the length of his arm he could reach the wires Davie had described: they were taut, and free of rust—were therefore not iron or steel. He saw also that a little down the shaft a faint light came in from the opposite side: there was another opening somewhere! Next he saw that each following string—for strings he already counted them—was placed a little lower than that before it, so that their succession was inclined to the other side of the shaft—apparently in a plane between the two openings, that a draught might pass along their plane: this must surely be the instrument whence the music flowed! He descended.

"Do you know, my lady," he asked Arctura, "how the aeolian harp is placed for the wind to wake it?"

"The only one I have seen," she answered, "was made to fit into a window; the lower sash was opened just wide enough to let it in, so that the wind entering must pass across the strings."

Then Donal was all but certain.

"Of course," he said, after describing what he had seen, "we cannot be absolutely sure without having been here with the music, and having experimented by covering and uncovering the opening; and for that we must wait a south-easterly wind."

CHAPTER XLII.

COMMUNISM.

But Donal did not feel that even then would he have exhausted the likelihood of discovery. That the source of the music that had so long haunted the house was an aeolian harp in a chimney that had never or scarcely been used, might be enough to satisfy some, but he wanted to know as well why, if this was a chimney, it neither had been nor was used, and to what room it was a chimney. For the question had come to him—might not the music hold some relation with the legend of the lost room?

Inquiry after legendary lore had drawn nearer and nearer, and the talk about such as belonged to the castle had naturally increased. In this talk was not seldom mentioned a ghost, as yet seen at times about the place. This Donal attributed to glimpses of the earl in his restless night-walks; but by the domestics, both such as had seen *something* and such as had not, the apparition was naturally associated with the lost chamber, as the place whence the spectre issued, and whither he returned.

Donal's spare hours were now much given to his friend Andrew Comin. The good man had so far recovered as to think himself able to work again; but he soon found it was little he could do. His strength was gone, and the exertion necessary to the lightest labour caused him pain. It was sad to watch him on his stool, now putting in a stitch, now stopping because of the cough which so sorely haunted his thin, wind-blown tent. His face had grown white and thin, and he had nearly lost his merriment, though not his cheerfulness; he never looked other than content. He had made up his mind he was not going to get better, but to go home through a lingering illness. He was ready to go and ready to linger, as God pleased.

There was nothing wonderful in this; but to some good people even it did appear wonderful that he showed no uneasiness as to how Doory would fare when he was gone. The house was indeed their own, but there was no money in it—not even enough

to pay the taxes; and if she sold it, the price would not be enough to live upon. The neighbours were severe on Andrew's imagined indifference to his wife's future, and it was in their eyes a shame to be so cheerful on the brink of the grave. Not one of them had done more than peep into the world of faith in which Andrew lived. Not one of them could have understood that for Andrew to allow the least danger of evil to his Doory, would have been to behold the universe rocking on the slippery shoulders of Chance.

A little moan escaping her as she looked one evening into her money-teapot, made Donal ask her a question or two. She confessed that she had but sixpence left. Now Donal had spent next to nothing since he came, and had therefore a few pounds in hand. His father and mother had sent back what he sent them, as being in need of nothing: sir Gibbie was such a good son to them that they were living in what they counted luxury: Robert doubted whether he was not ministering to the flesh in allowing Janet to provide beef-brose for him twice in the week! So Donal was free to spend for his next neighbours—just what his people, who were grand about money, would have had him do. Never in their cottage had a penny been wasted; never one refused where was need.

"An'rew," he said—and found the mother-tongue here fittest—"I'm thinkin' ye maun be growin' some short o' siller i' this time o' warklessness!"

"'Deed, I wadna won'er!" answered Andrew. "Doory says naething aboot sic triffles!"

"Weel," rejoined Donal, "I thank God I hae some i' the ill pickle o' no bein' wantit, an' sae in danger o' cankerin'; an' atween brithers there sudna be twa purses!"

"Ye hae yer ain fowk to luik efter, sir!" said Andrew.

"They're weel luikit efter—better nor ever they war i' their lives; they're as weel aff as I am mysel' up i' yon gran' castel. They hae a freen' wha but for them wad ill hae lived to be the great man he is the noo; an' there's naething ower muckle for him to du for them; sae my siller 's my ain, an' yours. An'rew, an' Doory's!"

The old man put him through a catechism as to his ways and means and prospects, and finding that Donal believed as firmly as himself in the care of the Master, and was convinced there was nothing that Master would rather see him do with his money than help those who needed it, especially those who trusted in him, he yielded.

"It's no, ye see," said Donal, "that I hae ony doobt o' the Lord providin' gien I had failt, but he hauds the thing to my

han', jist as muckle as gien he said, 'There's for you, Donal!' The fowk o' this warl' michtna appruv, but you an' me kens better, An'rew. We ken there's nae guid in siller but do the wull o' the Lord wi' 't—an' help to ane anither is his dear wull. It's no 'at he's short o' siller himsel', but he likes to gie anither a turn!"

"I'll tak it," said the old man.

"There's what I hae," returned Donal.

"Na, na; nane o' that!" said Andrew. "Ye're treatin' me like a muckle, reivin', sornin' beggar—offerin' me a' that at ance! Whaur syne wad be the prolonged sweetness o' haein' 't i' portions frae yer han', as frae the neb o' an angel-corbie sent frae verra hame wi' yer denner!"—Here a glimmer of the old merriment shone through the worn look and pale eyes.—"Na, na, sir," he went on; "jist talk the thing ower wi' Doory, an' lat her hae what she wants an' nae mair. She wudna like it. Wha kens what may came i' the meantime—Deith himsel', maybe! Or see—gie Doory a five shillins, an' whan that's dune she can lat ye ken!"

Donal was forced to leave it thus, but he did his utmost to impress upon Doory that all he had was at her disposal.

"I had new clothes," he said, "before I came; I have all I want to eat and drink; and for books, there's a whole ancient library at my service!—what possibly could I wish for more? It's a mere luxury to hand the money over to you, Doory! I'm thinkin', Doory," for he had by this time got to address her by her husband's name for her, "there's naebody i' this warl', 'cep' the oonseen Lord himsel', lo'es yer man sae weel as you an' me; an' weel ken I you an' him wad share yer last wi' me; sae I'm only giein' ye o' yer ain gude wull; an' I'll doobt that gien ye takna sae lang as I hae."

Thus adjured, and satisfied that her husband was content, the old woman made no difficulty.

CHAPTER XLIII.

EPPY AND KENNEDY.

When Stephen Kennedy heard that Eppy had gone back to her grandparents, a faint hope revived in his bosom; he knew nothing of the late passage between the two parties. He but knew that she was looking sad: she might perhaps allow him to be of some service to her! Separation had fostered more and more gentle thoughts of her in his heart; he was ready to forgive her everything, and believe nothing serious against her, if only she would let him love her again. Modesty had hitherto kept him from throwing himself in her way, but he now haunted the house in the hope of catching a glimpse of her, and when she began to go again into the town, saw her repeatedly, following her to be near her, but taking care she should not see him: partly from her self-absorption he had succeeded in escaping her notice.

At length, however, one night, he tried to summon up courage to accost her. It was a lovely, moonlit night, half the street black with quaint shadows, the other half shining like sand in the yellow light. On the moony side people standing at their doors could recognize each other two houses away, but on the other, friends might pass without greeting. Eppy had gone into the baker's; Kennedy had seen her go in, and stood in the shadow, waiting, all but determined to speak to her. She staid a good while, but one accustomed to wait for fish learns patience. At length she appeared. By this time, however, though not his patience, Kennedy's courage had nearly evaporated; and when he saw her he stepped under an archway, let her pass, and followed afresh. All at once resolve, which yet was no resolve, awoke in him. It was as if some one took him and set him before her. She started when he stepped in front, and gave a little cry.

"Dinna be feart, Eppy," he said; "I wudna hurt a hair o' yer heid. I wud raither be skinned mysel'!"

"Gang awa," said Eppy. "Ye hae no richt to stan' i' my gait!"

"Nane but the richt o' lo'ein' ye better nor ever!" said Kennedy, "—gien sae be as ye'll lat me ony gait shaw 't!"

The words softened her; she had dreaded reproach, if not indignant remonstrance. She began to cry.

"Gien onything i' *my* pooer wud mak the grief lichter upo' ye,

Eppy," he said, "ye hae but to name 't! I'm no gauin' to ask ye to merry me, for that I ken ye dinna care aboot; but gien I micht be luikit upon as a freen', if no to you, yet to yours—alloot onyw'y to help i' yer trible, I mean, I'm ready to lay me i' the dirt afore ye. I hae nae care for mysel' ony mair, an' maum do something for somebody—an' wha sae soon as yersel', Eppy!"

For sole answer, Eppy went on crying. She was far from happy. She had nearly persuaded herself that all was over between her and lord Forgue, and almost she could, but for shame, have allowed Kennedy to comfort her as an old friend. Everything in her mind was so confused, and everything around her so miserable, that she could but cry. She continued crying, and as they were in a walled lane into which no windows looked, Kennedy, in the simplicity of his heart, and the desire to comfort her who little from him deserved comfort, came up to her, and puttting his arm round her, said again,

"Dinna be feart of me, Eppy. I'm a man ower sair-hertit to do ye ony hurt. It's no as thinkin' ye my ain, Eppy, I wud preshume to du onything for ye, but as an auld freen', fain to tak the dog aff o' ye. Are ye in want o' onything? Ye maunhae a heap o' trible, I weel ken, wi' yer gran'father's mischance, an' it's easy to un'erstan' 'at things may well be turnin' scarce aboot ye; but be sure o' this, that as lang's my mither has onything, she'll be blyth to share the same wi' you an' yours."

He said *his mother*, but she had nothing save what he provided her with.

"I thank ye, Stephen," said Eppy, touched with his goodness; "but there's nae necessity; we hae plenty."

She moved on, her apron still to her eyes. Kennedy followed her.

"Gien the yoong lord hae wranged ye ony gait," he said from behind her, "an' gien there be ony amen's ye wad hae o' him,——"

She turned with a quickness that was fierce, and in the dim light Kennedy saw her eyes blazing.

"I want naething frae your han', Stephen Kennedy," she said. "My lord 's naething to you—nor yet muckle to me!" she added, with sudden reaction and an outburst of self-pity, and again fell a weeping—and sobbing now.

With the timidity of a strong man before the girl he loves and therefore fears, Kennedy once more tried to comfort her, wiping her eyes with her apron. While he did so, a man, turning a corner quickly, came almost upon them. He started back, then came nearer, looked hard at them, and spoke. It was lord Forgue.

"Eppy!" he exclaimed, in a tone in which indignation blended with surprise.

Eppy gave a cry, and ran to him. He pushed her away.

"My lord," said Kennedy, "the lass will nane o' me or mine. I sair doobt there's nane but yersel' can please her. But I sweir by God, my lord, gien ye du her ony wrang, I'll no rest, nicht nor day, till I hae made ye repent it."

"Go to the devil!" said Forgue; "there's an old crow, I suspect, yet to pluck between us! For me you may take her, though. I don't go halves."

Eppy laid her hand timidly on his arm, but again he pushed her away.

"Oh, my lord!" she sobbed, and could say no more for weeping.

"How is it I find you here with this man?" he asked. "I don't want to be unfair to you, but it looks *rather* bad!"

"My lord," said Kennedy.

"Hold your tongue; let her speak for herself."

"I had no tryst wi' him, my lord! I never said come nigh me," sobbed Eppy. "—Ye see what ye hae dune!" she cried, turning in anger on Kennedy, and her tears suddenly ceasing. "Never but ill hae ye brocht me! What business had ye to come efter me this gait, makin' mischief 'atween my lord an' me? Can a body no set fut ayont the door-sill, but they maun be followt o' them they wud see far eneuch!"

Kennedy turned and went, and Eppy with a fresh burst of tears turned to go also. But she had satisfied Forgue that there was nothing between them, and he was soon more successful than Kennedy in consoling her.

While absent he had been able enough to get on without her, but no sooner was he home than, in the weary lack of interest, the feelings which, half lamenting, half rejoicing, he had imagined extinct, began to revive, and he went to the town vaguely hoping to get a sight of Eppy. Coming upon her tête à tête with her old lover, first a sense of unpardonable injury possessed him, and next the conviction that he was as madly in love with her as ever. The tide of old tenderness came throbbing and streaming back over the ghastly sands of jealousy, and ere they parted he had made with her an appointment to meet the next night in a more suitable spot.

Donal was seated by Andrew's bedside reading: he had now the opportunity of bringing many things before him such as the old man did not know to exist. Those last days of sickness and weakness were among the most blessed of his life; much that

could not be done for many a good man with ten times his education, could be done for a man like Andrew Comin.

Eppy had done her best to remove all traces of emotion ere she re-entered the house; but she could not help the shining of her eyes: the joy-lamp relighted in her bosom shone through them: and Andrew looking up when she entered, Donal, seated with his back to her, at once knew her secret: her grandfather read it from her face, and Donal read it from his.

"She has seen Forgue!" he said to himself. "I hope the old man will die soon."

CHAPTER XLIV.

HIGH AND LOW.

WHEN lord Morven heard of his son's return, he sent for Donal, received him in a friendly way, gave him to understand that, however he might fail to fall in with his views, he depended thoroughly on his honesty, and begged he would keep him informed of his son's proceedings.

Donal replied that, while he fully acknowledged his lordship's right to know what his son was doing, he could not take the office of a spy.

"But I will warn lord Forgue," he concluded, "that I may see it right to let his father know what he is about. I fancy, however, he understands as much already."

"Pooh! that would be only to teach him cunning!" said the earl.

"I can do nothing underhand," replied Donal. "I will help no man to keep an unrighteous secret, but neither will I secretly disclose it."

Meeting him a few days after, Forgue would have passed him without recognition, but Donal stopped him, and said—

"I believe, my lord, you have seen Eppy since your return."

"What the deuce is that to you?"

"I wish your lordship to understand that whatever comes to my knowledge concerning your proceedings in regard to her, I will report to your father if I see fit."

"The warning is unnecessary. Few informers, however, would have given me the advantage, and I thank you: so far I am indebted to you. None the less the shame of the informer remains!"

"Your lordship's judgment of me is no more to me than that of yon rook up there."

"You doubt my honour?" said Forgue with a sneer.

"I do. I doubt you. You do not know yourself. Time will show. For God's sake, my lord, look to yourself! You are in terrible danger."

"I would rather do wrong for love than right for fear. I scorn such threats."

"Threats, my lord!" echoed Donal. "Is it a threat to warn you that your very consciousness may become a curse to you? that to know yourself may be your hell? that you may come to make it your first care to forget what you are? Do you know what Shakspere says of Tarquin—

> Besides, his soul's fair temple is defaced;
> To whose weak ruins muster troops of cares,
> To ask the spotted princess how she fares—?"

"Oh, hang your preaching!" cried Forgue, and turned away.

"My lord," said Donal, "if you will not hear me, there are preachers you must."

"They will not be quite so long-winded then!" Forgue answered.

"You are right," said Donal; "they will not."

All Forgue's thoughts were now occupied with the question how with least danger Eppy and he were to meet. He did not contemplate treachery. At this time of his life he could not have respected himself, little as was required for that, had he been consciously treacherous; but no man who in love yet loves himself more, is safe from becoming a traitor: potentially he is one already. Treachery to him who is guilty of it seems only natural self-preservation; the man who can do a vile thing is incapable of seeing it as it is; and that ought to make us doubtful of our judgments of ourselves, especially defensive judgments. Forgue did not suspect himself—not although he knew that his passion had but just regained a lost energy, revived at the idea of another man having the girl! It did not shame him that he had begun to forget her, or that he had been so roused to fresh desire. If he had stayed away six months, he would practically have forgotten her altogether. Some may think that, if he had devotion enough to surmount the vulgarities of her position and manners and ways of thought, his love could hardly be such as to yield so soon; but Eppy was not in herself vulgar. Many of even humbler education than she are far less really vulgar than some in the forefront of society. No doubt the conventionalities of a man like Forgue

must have been sometimes shocked in familiar intercourse with one like Eppy; but while he was merely flirting with her, the very things that shocked would also amuse him—for I need hardly say he was not genuinely refined; and by and by the growing passion obscured them. There is no doubt that, had she been confronted as his wife with the common people of society, he would have become aware of many things as vulgarities which were only simplicities; but in the meantime she was no more vulgar to him than a lamb or a baby is vulgar, however unfit either for a Belgravian drawing-room. Vulgar, at the same time, he would have thought and felt her, but for the love that made him do her justice. Love is the opener as well as closer of eyes. But men who, having seen, become blind again, think they have had their eyes finally opened.

For some time there was no change in Eppy's behaviour but that she was not tearful as before. She continued diligent, never grumbled at the hardest work, and seemed desirous of making up for remissness in the past, when in truth she was trying to make up for something else in the present: she would atone for what she would not tell, by doing immediate duty with the greater devotion. But by and by she began occasionally to show, both in manner and countenance, a little of the old pertness, mingled with uneasiness. The phenomenon, however, was so intermittent and unpronounced, as to be manifest only to eyes familiar with her looks and ways: to Donal it was clear that the relation between her and Forgue was resumed. Yet she never went out in the evening except sent by her grandmother, and then she always came home even with haste—anxious, it might have seemed, to avoid suspicion.

It was the custom with Donal and Davie to go often into the fields and woods in the fine weather—they called this their observation class—to learn what they might of the multitudinous goings on in this or that of Nature's workshops: there each for himself and the other exercised his individual powers of seeing and noting and putting together. Donal knew little of woodland matters, having been chiefly accustomed to meadows and bare hill-sides; yet in the woods he was the keener of the two to observe, and could the better teach that he was but a better learner.

One day, as they were walking together under the thin shade of a fir-thicket, Davie said, with a sudden change of subject—

"I wonder if we shall meet Forgue to-day! he gets up early now, and goes out. It is neither to fish nor shoot, for he doesn't take his rod or gun; he must be watching or looking for something!—Shouldn't you say so, Mr. Grant?"

This set Donal thinking. Eppy was never out at night, or only for a few minutes; and Forgue went out early in the morning! But if Eppy would meet him, how could he or anyone help it?

CHAPTER XLV.

A LAST ENCOUNTER.

Now for a while, Donal seldom saw lady Arctura, and when he did, received from her no encouragement to address her. The troubled look had reappeared on her face. In her smile, as they passed in hall or corridor, glimmered an expression almost pathetic —something like an appeal, as if she stood in sore need of his help, but dared not ask for it. She was again much in the company of Miss Carmichael, and Donal had good cause to fear that the pharisaism of her would-be directress was coming down upon her spirit, not like rain on the mown grass, but like frost on the spring flowers. The impossibility of piercing the Christian pharisee holding the traditions of the elders, in any vital part—so pachydermatous is he to any spiritual argument—is a sore trial to the old Adam still unslain in lovers of the truth. At the same time nothing gives patience better opportunity for her perfect work. And it is well they cannot be reached by argument and *so* persuaded; they would but enter the circles of the faithful to work fresh schisms and breed fresh imposthumes.

But Donal had begun to think that he had been too forbearing towards the hideous doctrines advocated by Miss Carmichael. It is one thing where evil doctrines are quietly held, and the truth associated with them assimilated by good people doing their best with what has been taught them, and quite another thing where they are forced upon some shrinking nature, weak to resist through the very reverence which is its excellence. The finer nature, from inability to think another of less pure intent than itself, is often at a great disadvantage in the hands of the coarser. He made up his mind that, risk as it was to enter into disputations with a worshipper of the letter, inasmuch as for argument the letter is immeasurably more available than the spirit—for while the spirit lies in the letter unperceived, it has no force, and the letter-worshipper is incapable of seeing that God could not possibly mean what he makes of it—notwithstanding the risk, he resolved to hold himself ready, and if anything was given him, to cry it out and not spare. Nor had he long resolved ere the opportunity came.

It had come to be known that Donal frequented the old avenue, and it was with intent, in the pride of her acquaintance with scripture, and her power to use it, that Miss Carmichael one afternoon led her unwilling, rather recusant, and very unhappy disciple thither: she sought an encounter with him: his insolence towards the old-established faith must be confounded, his obnoxious influence on Arctura frustrated! It was a bright autumnal day. The trees were sorely bereaved, but some foliage yet hung in thin yellow clouds upon their patient boughs. There was plenty of what Davie called *scushlin*, that is the noise of walking with scarce lifted feet amongst the thick-lying withered leaves. But less foliage means more sunlight.

Donal was sauntering along, his book in his hand, now and then reading a little, now and then looking up to the half-bared branches, now and then, like Davie, sweeping a cloud of the fallen multitude before him. He was in this childish act when, looking up, he saw the two ladies approaching; he did not see the peculiar glance Miss Carmichael threw her companion: "Behold your prophet!" it said. He would have passed with lifted bonnet, but Miss Carmichael stopped, smiling: her smile was bright because it showed her good teeth, but was not pleasant because it showed nothing else.

"Glorying over the fallen, Mr. Grant?" she said.

Donal in his turn smiled.

"That is not Mr. Grant's way," said Arctura, "—so far at least as I have known him!"

"How careless the trees are of their poor children!" said Miss Carmichael, affecting sympathy for the leaves.

"Pardon me," said Donal, "if I grudge them your pity: there is nothing more of children in those leaves than there is in the hair that falls on the barber's floor."

"It is not very gracious to pull a lady up so sharply!" returned Miss Carmichael, still smiling: "I spoke poetically."

"There is no poetry in what is not true," rejoined Donal. "Those are not the children of the tree."

"Of course," said Miss Carmichael, a little surprised to find their foils crossed already, "a tree has no children! but——"

"A tree no children!" exclaimed Donal. "What then are all those beech-nuts under the leaves? Are *they* not the children of the tree?"

"Yes; and lost like the leaves!" sighed Miss Carmichael.

"Why do you say they are lost? They must fulfil the end for which they were made, and if so, they cannot be lost."

"For what end were they made?"

"I do not know. If they all grew up, they would be a good deal in the way."

"Then you say there are more seeds than are required?"

"How could I, when I do not know what they are required for? How can I tell that it is not necessary for the life of the tree that it should produce them all, and necessary too for the ground to receive so much life-rent from the tree!"

"But you must admit that some things are lost!"

"Yes, surely!" answered Donal. "Why else should he come and look till he find?"

No such answer had the theologian expected; she was not immediate with her rejoinder.

"But some of them are lost after all!" she said.

"Doubtless; there are sheep that will keep running away. But he goes after them again."

"He will not do that for ever!"

"He will."

"I do not believe it."

"Then you do not believe that God is infinite!"

"I do."

"How can you? Is he not the Lord God merciful and gracious?"

"I am glad you know that."

"But if his mercy and his graciousness are not infinite, then he is not infinite!"

"There are other attributes in which he is infinite."

"But he is not infinite in all his attributes? He is partly infinite, and partly finite!—infinite in knowledge and power, but in love, in forgiveness, in all those things which are the most beautiful, the most divine, the most Christ-like, he is finite, measurable, bounded, small!"

"I care nothing for such finite reasoning. I take the word of inspiration, and go by that!"

"Let me hear then," said Donal, with an uplifting of his heart in prayer; for it seemed no light thing for Arctura which of them should show the better reason.

Now it had so fallen that the ladies were talking about the doctrine called Adoption when first they saw Donal; whence this doctrine was the first to occur to the champion of orthodoxy as a weapon wherewith to foil the enemy.

"The most precious doctrine, if one may say so, in the whole Bible, is that of Adoption. God by the mouth of his apostle Paul tells us that God adopts some for his children, and leaves the rest. If because of this you say he is not infinite in mercy, when the Bible says he is, you are guilty of blasphemy."

In a tone calm to solemnity, Donal answered—

"God's mercy is infinite; and the doctrine of Adoption is one of the falsest of false doctrines. In bitter lack of the spirit whereby we cry *Abba, Father*, the so-called Church invented it; and it remains, a hideous mask wherewith false and ignorant teachers scare God's children from their Father's arms."

"I hate sentiment—most of all in religion!" said Miss Carmichael with contempt.

"You shall have none," returned Donal. "Tell me what is meant by Adoption."

"The taking of children," answered Miss Carmichael, already spying a rock ahead, "and treating them as your own."

"Whose children?" asked Donal.

"Anyone's."

"Whose," insisted Donal, "are the children whom God adopts?"

She was on the rock, and a little staggered. But she pulled up courage and said—

"The children of Satan."

"Then how are they to be blamed for doing the deeds of their father?"

"You know very well what I mean! Satan did not make them. God made them, but they sinned and fell."

"Then did God repudiate them?"

"Yes."

"And they became the children of another?"

"Yes, of Satan."

"Then God disowns his children, and when they are the children of another, adopts them? Miss Carmichael, it is too foolish! Would that be like a father? Because his children do not please him, he repudiates them altogether; and then he wants them again—not as his own, but as the children of a stranger, whom he will adopt! The original relationship is no longer of any force—has no weight even with their very own father! What ground could such a parent have to complain of his children?"

"You dare not say the wicked are the children of God the same as the good."

"That be far from me! Those who do the will of God are infinitely more his children than those who do not; they are born of the innermost heart of God; they are then of the nature of Jesus Christ, whose glory is obedience. But if they were not in the first place, and in the most profound fact, the children of God, they could never become his children in that higher, that

highest sense, by any fiction of adoption. Do you think if the devil could create, his children could ever become the children of God? But you and I, and every pharisee, publican, and sinner in the world, are equally the children of God to begin with. That is the root of all the misery and all the hope. Because we are his children, we must become his children in heart and soul, or be for ever wretched. If we ceased to be his, if the relation between us were destroyed, which is impossible, no redemption would be possible, there would be nothing left to redeem."

"You may talk as you see fit, Mr. Grant, but while Paul teaches the doctrine, I will hold it; he may perhaps know a little better than you."

"Paul teaches no such doctrine. He teaches just what I have been saying. The word translated *adoption*, he uses for *the raising of one who is a son to the true position of a son.*"

"The presumption in you to say what the apostle did or did not mean!"

"Why, Miss Carmichael, do you think the gospel comes to us as a set of fools? Is there any way of truly or worthily receiving a message without understanding it? A message is sent for the very sake of being in some measure at least understood. Without that it would be no message at all. I am bound by the will and express command of the master to understand the things he says to me. He commands me to see their rectitude, because they being true, I ought to be able to see them true. In the hope of seeing as he would have me see, I read my Greek Testament every day. But it is not necessary to know Greek to see what Paul means by the so-translated *adoption*. You have only to consider his words with intent to find out his meaning, and without intent to find in them the teaching of this or that doctor of divinity. In the epistle to the Galatians, whose child does he speak of as adopted? It is the father's own child, his heir, who differs nothing from a slave until he enters upon his true relation to his father—the full status of a son. So also, in another passage, by the same word he means the redemption of the body—its passing into the higher condition of outward things, into a condition in itself, and a home around it, fit for the sons and daughters of God—that we be no more like strangers, but like what we are, the children of the house. To use any word of Paul's to make human being feel as if he were not by birth, making, origin, or whatever word of closer import can be found, the child of God, or as if anything he had done or could do could annul that relationship, is of the devil, the father of evil, not either of Paul or of Christ.—Why, my lady," continued Donal, turning

to Arctura, "all the evil lies in this—that he is our father and we are not his children. To fulfil the poorest necessities of our being, we must be his children in brain and heart, in body and soul and spirit, in obedience and hope and gladness and love—his out and out, beyond all that tongue can say, mind think, or heart desire. Then only is our creation finished—then only are we what we were made to be. This is that for the sake of which we are troubled on all sides."

He ceased. Miss Carmichael was intellectually cowed, but her heart was nowise touched. She had never had that longing after closest relation with God which sends us feeling after the father. But now, taking courage under the overshadowing wing of the divine, Arctura spoke.

"I do hope what you say is true, Mr. Grant!" she said with a longing sigh.

"Oh yes, *hope!* we all hope! But it is the word we have to do with!" said Miss Carmichael.

"I have given you the truth of this word!" said Donal.

But as if she heard neither of them, Arctura went on,

"If it were but true!" she moaned. "It would set right everything on the face of the earth!"

"You mean far more than that, my lady!" said Donal. "You mean everything in the human heart, which will to all eternity keep moaning and crying out for the Father of it, until it is one with its one relation!"

He lifted his bonnet, and would have passed on.

"One word, Mr. Grant," said Miss Carmichael. "—No man holding such doctrines could with honesty become a clergyman of the church of Scotland."

"Very likely," replied Donal, "Good afternoon."

"Thank you, Mr. Grant!" said Arctura. "I *hope* you are right."

When he was gone, the ladies resumed their walk in silence. At length Miss Carmichael spoke.

"Well, I must say, of all the conceited young men I have had the misfortune to meet, your Mr. Grant bears the palm! Such self-assurance! such presumption! such forwardness!"

"Are you certain, Sophia," rejoined Arctura, "that it is self-assurance, and not conviction that gives him his courage?"

"He is a teacher of lies! He goes dead against all that good men say and believe! The thing is as clear as daylight: he is altogether wrong!"

"What if God be sending fresh light into the minds of his people?"

"The old light is good enough for me!"

"But it may not be good enough for God! What if Mr. Grant should be his messenger to you and me!"

"A likely thing! A raw student from the hills of Daurside!"

"I cherish a profound hope that he may be in the right. Much good, you know, did come out of Galilee! Every place and every person is despised by somebody!"

"Arctura! He has infected you with his frightful irreverence!"

"If he be a messenger of Jesus Christ," said Arctura, quietly, "he has had from you the reception he would expect, for the disciple must be as his master."

Miss Carmichael stood still abruptly. Her face was in a flame, but her words came cold and hard.

"I am sorry," she said, "our friendship should come to so harsh a conclusion, lady Arctura; but it is time it should end when you speak so to one who has been doing her best for so long to enlighten you! If this be the first result of your new gospel—well! Remember who said, 'If an angel from heaven preach any other gospel to you than I have preached, let him be accursed!"

She turned back.

"Oh, Sophia, do not leave me so!" cried Arctura.

But she was already yards away, her skirt making a small whirlwind that went after her through the withered leaves. Arctura burst into tears, and sat down at the foot of one of the great beeches. Miss Carmichael never looked behind her. She met Donal again, for he too had turned: he uncovered, but she took no heed. She had done with him! Her poor Arctura.

Donal was walking gently on, thinking, with closed book, when the wind bore to his ear a low sob from Arctura. He looked up, and saw her: she sat weeping like one rejected. He could not pass or turn and leave her thus! She heard his steps in the withered leaves, glanced up, dropped her head for a moment, then rose with a feeble attempt at a smile. Donal understood the smile: she would not have him troubled because of what had taken place!

"Mr. Grant," she said, coming towards him, "St. Paul laid a curse upon even an angel from heaven if he preached any other gospel than his! It is terrible!"

"It is terrible, and I say *amen* to it with all my heart," returned Donal. "But the gospel you have received is not the gospel of Paul; it is one substituted for it—and that by no angel from heaven, but by men with hide-bound souls, who, in order to

get them into their own intellectual pockets, melted down the ingots of the kingdom, and re-cast them in moulds of wretched legalism, borrowed of the Romans who crucified their master. Grand, childlike, heavenly things they must explain, forsooth, after vulgar worldly notions of law and right! But they meant well, seeking to justify the ways of God to men, therefore the curse of the apostle does not fall, I think, upon them. They sought a way out of their difficulties, and thought they had found one, when in reality it was their faith in God himself that alone got them out of the prison of their theories. But gladly would I see discomfited such as, receiving those inventions at the hundredth hand, and moved by none of the fervour with which they were first promulgated, lay, as the word and will of God, lumps of iron and heaps of dust upon live, beating, longing hearts that cry out after their God!"

"Oh, I do hope what you say is true!" panted Arctura. "I think I shall die if I find it is not!"

"If you find what I tell you untrue, it will only be that it is not grand and free and bounteous enough. To think anything too good to be true, is to deny God—to say the untrue may be better than the true—that there might be a greater God than he. Remember, Christ is in the world still, and within our call."

"I will think of what you tell me," said Arctura, holding out her hand.

"If anything in particular troubles you," said Donal, "I shall be most glad to help you if I can; but it is better there should not be much talking. The thing lies between you and your Father."

With these words he left her. Arctura followed slowly to the house, and went straight to her room, her mind filling as she went with slow-reviving strength and a great hope. No doubt some of her relief came from the departure of her incubus friend; but that must soon have vanished in fresh sorrow, save for the hope and strength to which this departure yielded the room. She trusted that by the time she saw her again she would be more firmly grounded concerning many things, and able to set them forth aright. She was not yet free of the notion that you must be able to defend your convictions; she scarce felt at liberty to say she believed a thing, so long as she knew an argument against it which she could not show to be false. Alas for our beliefs if they go no farther than the poor horizon of our experience or our logic, or any possible wording of the beliefs themselves! Alas for ourselves if our beliefs are not what we shape our lives, our actions, our aspirations, our hopes, our repentances by!

Donal was glad indeed to hope that now at length an open

door stood before the poor girl. He had been growing much interested in her, as one on whom life lay heavy, one who seemed ripe for the kingdom of heaven, yet in whose way stood one who would neither enter herself, nor allow her to enter that would. She was indeed fit for nothing but the kingdom of heaven, so much was she already the child of him whom, longing after him, she had not yet dared to call her father. His regard for her was that of the gentle strong towards the weak he would help; and now that she seemed fairly started on the path of life, the path, namely, to the knowledge of him who is the life, his care over her grew the more tender. It is the part of the strong to serve the weak, to minister that whereby they too may grow strong. But he rather than otherwise avoided meeting her, and for a good many days they did not so much as see each other

CHAPTER XLVI.

A HORRIBLE STORY.

THE health of the earl remained fluctuating. Its condition depended much on the special indulgence. There was hardly any sort of narcotic with which he did not at least make experiment, if he did not indulge in it. He made no pretence even to himself of seeking therein the furtherance of knowledge; he wanted solely to find how this or that, thus or thus modified or combined, would contribute to his living a life such as he would have it, and other quite than that ordered for him by a power which least of all powers he chose to acknowledge. The power of certain drugs he was eager to understand: the living source of him and them and their correlations, he scarcely recognized. This came of no hostility to religion other than the worst hostility of all—that of a life irresponsive to its claims. He believed neither like saint nor devil; he believed and did not obey, he believed and did not *yet* tremble.

The one day he was better, the other worse, according, as I say, to the character and degree of his indulgence. At one time it much affected his temper, taking from him all mastery of himself; at another made him so dull and stupid, that he resented nothing except any attempt to rouse him from his hebetude. Of these differences he took unfailing note; but the worst influence of all was a constant one, and of it he made no account: however

the drugs might vary in their operations upon him, to one thing they all tended—the destruction of his moral nature.

Urged more or less all his life by a sort of innate rebellion against social law, he had done great wrongs—whether also committed what are called crimes, I cannot tell: no repentance had followed the remorse their consequences had sometimes occasioned. And now the possibility of remorse even was gradually forsaking him. Such a man belongs rather to the kind demoniacal than the kind human; yet so long as nothing occurs giving to his possible an occasion to embody itself in the actual, he may live honoured, and die respected. There is always, not the less, the danger of his real nature, or rather unnature, breaking out in this way or that diabolical.

Although he went so little out of the house, and apparently never beyond the grounds, he yet learned a good deal at times of things going on in the neighbourhood: Davie brought him news; so did Simmons; and now and then he would have an interview with his half acknowledged relative, the factor.

One morning before he was up, he sent for Donal, and requested him to give Davie a half-holiday, and do something for him instead.

"You know, or perhaps you don't know, that I have a house in the town," he said, "—the only house, indeed, now belonging to the earldom—a not very attractive house which you must have seen—on the main street, a little before you come to the Morven Arms."

"I believe I know the house, my lord," answered Donal, "with strong iron stanchions to the lower windows, and ——?"

Yes, that is the house; and I daresay you have heard the story of it—I mean how it fell into its present disgrace! The thing happened more than a hundred years ago. But I have spent some nights in it myself notwithstanding."

"I should like to hear it, my lord," said Donal.

"You may as well have it from myself as from another! It does not touch any of us, for the family was not then represented by the same branch as now; I might else be thin-skinned about it. No mere legend, mind you, but a very dreadful fact, which resulted in the abandonment of the house! I think it time, for my part, that it should be forgotten and the house let. It was before the castle and the title parted company: that is a tale worth telling too! there was little fair play in either! but I will not trouble you with it now.

"Into the generation then above ground," the earl began, assuming a book-tone the instant he began to narrate, "by one of

those freaks of nature specially strange and more inexplicable than the rest, had been born an original savage. You know that the old type, after so many modifications have been wrought upon it, will sometimes reappear in its ancient crudity amidst the latest development of the race, animal and vegetable too, I suppose!—well, so it was now: I use no figure of speech when I say that the apparition, the phenomenon, was a savage. I do not mean that he was an exceptionally rough man for his position, but for any position in the Scotland of that age. No doubt he was regarded as a madman, and used as a madman; but my opinion is the more philosophical—that, by an arrest of development, into the middle of the ladies and gentlemen of the family came a veritable savage, and one out of no darkest age of history, but from beyond all record—out of the awful prehistoric times."

His lordship visibly and involuntarily shuddered, as at the memory of something he had seen: into that region he had probably wandered in his visions.

"He was a fierce and furious savage—worse than anything you can imagine. The only sign of any influence of civilization upon him was that he was cowed by the eye of his keeper. Never, except by rarest chance, was he left alone and awake: no one could tell what he might not do!

"He was of gigantic size, with coarse black hair—the brawniest fellow and the ugliest, they say—for you may suppose my description is but legendary: there is no portrait of him on our walls!—with a huge, shapeless, cruel, greedy mouth,"—

As his lordship said the words, Donal, with involuntary insight, saw both cruelty and greed in the mouth that spoke, though it was neither huge nor shapeless.

—"lips hideously red and large, with the whitest teeth inside them.—I give you the description," said his lordship, who evidently lingered not without pleasure on the details of his recital, "just as I used to hear it from my old nurse, who had been all her life in the family, and had it from her mother who was in it at the time. —His great passion, his keenest delight, was animal food. He ate enormously—more, it was said, than three hearty men. An hour after he had gorged himself, he was ready to gorge again. Roast meat was his main delight, but he was fond of broth also.—He must have been more like Mrs. Shelley's creation in *Frankenstein* than any other. All the time I read that story, I had the vision of my far-off cousin constantly before me, as I saw him in my mind's eye when my nurse described him; and often I wondered whether Mrs. Shelley could have heard of him.—In an earlier age and more practical, they would have got rid of him by

readier and more thorough means, if only for shame of having brought such a being into the world, but they sent him with his keeper, a little man with a powerful eye, to that same house down in the town there: in an altogether solitary place they could persuade no man to live with him. At night he was always secured to his bed, otherwise his keeper would not have had courage to sleep, for he was as cunning as he was hideous. When he slept during the day, which he did frequently after a meal, his attendant contented himself with locking his door, and keeping his ears awake. At such times only did he venture to look on the world: he would step just outside the street-door, but would neither leave it, nor shut it behind him, lest the savage should perhaps escape from his room, bar it, and set the house on fire.

"One beautiful Sunday morning, the brute, after a good breakfast, had fallen asleep on his bed, and the keeper had gone down stairs, and was standing in the street with the door open behind him. All the people were at church, and the street was empty as a desert. He stood there for some time, enjoying the sweet air and the scent of the flowers, went in and got a light to his pipe, put coals on the fire, saw that the hugh cauldron of broth which the cook had left in his charge when he went to church—it was to serve for dinner and supper both—was boiling beautifully, went back, and again took his station in front of the open door. Presently came a neighbour woman from her house, leading by the hand a little girl too young to go to church. She stood talking with him for some time.

"Suddenly she cried, 'Good Lord! what's come o' the bairn?' The same instant came one piercing shriek—from some distance it seemed. The mother darted down the neighbouring close. But the keeper saw that the door behind him was shut, and was filled with horrible dismay. He darted to an entrance in the close, of which he always kept the key about him, and went straight to the kitchen. There by the fire stood the savage, gazing with a fixed fishy eye of rapture at the cauldron, which the steam, issuing in little sharp jets from under the lid, showed to be boiling furiously, with grand prophecy of broth. Ghastly horror in his very bones, the keeper lifted the lid—and there, beside the beef, with the broth bubbling in waves over her, lay the child! The demon had torn off her frock, and thrust her into the boiling liquid!

"There rose such an outcry that they were compelled to put him in chains and carry him no one knew whither; but nurse said he lived to old age. Ever since, the house has been uninhabited, with, of course, the reputation of being haunted. If you happen to be in its neighbourhood when it begins to grow dark, you may

see the children hurry past it in silence, now and then glancing back in dread, lest something should have opened the never-opened door, and be stealing after them. They call that something *The Red Etin*,—only this ogre was black, I am sorry to say; *red* was the proper colour for him."

"It is a horrible story!" said Donal.

"I want you to go to the house for me: you do not mind going, do you?"

"Not in the least," answered Donal.

"I want you to search a certain bureau there for some papers.—By the way, have you any news to give me about Forgue?"

"No, my lord," answered Donal. "I do not even know whether or not they meet, but I am afraid."

"Oh, I daresay," rejoined his lordship, "the whim is wearing off! One pellet drives out another. Behind the love in the popgun came the conviction that it would be simple ruin! But we Graemes are stiff-necked both to God and man, and I don't trust him much."

"He gave you no promise, if you remember, my lord."

"I remember very well; why the deuce should I not remember? I am not in the way of forgetting things! No, by God! nor forgiving them either! Where there's anything to forgive there's no fear of my forgetting!"

He followed the utterance with a laugh, as if he would have it pass for a joke, but there was no ring in the laugh.

He then gave Donal detailed instructions as to where the bureau stood, how he was to open it with a curious key which he told him where to find in the room, how also to open the secret part of the bureau in which the papers lay.

"Forget!" he echoed, turning and sweeping back on his trail; "I have not been in that house for twenty years: you can judge whether I forget!—No!" he added with an oath, "if I found myself forgetting I should think it time to look out; but there is no sign of that yet, thank God! There! take the keys, and be off! Simmons will give you the key of the house. You had better take that of the door in the close: it is easier to open."

Donal went away wondering at the pleasure his frightful tale afforded the earl: he had seemed positively to gloat over the details of it! These were much worse than I have recorded: he showed special delight in narrating how the mother took the body of her child out of the pot!

He sought Simmons and asked him for the key. The butler went to find it, but returned saying he could not lay his hands upon it; there was, however, the key of the front door: it might

prove stiff! Donal took it, and having oiled it well, set out for Morven House. But on his way he turned aside to see the Comins.

Andrew looked worse, and he thought he must be sinking. The moment he saw Donal he requested they might be left alone for a few minutes.

"My yoong freen'," he said, "the Lord has fauvoured me greatly in grantin' my last days the licht o' your coontenance. I hae learnt a heap frae ye 'at I kenna hoo I could hae come at wantin' ye."

"Eh, An'rew!" interrupted Donal, "I dinna weel ken hoo that can be, for it aye seemt to me ye had a' the knowledge 'at was gaein'!"

"The man can ill taich wha's no gaein' on learnin'; an' maybe whiles he learns mair frae his scholar nor the scholar learns frae him. But it's a' frae the Lord; the Lord is that speerit—an' first o' a' the speerit o' obeddience, wi'oot which there's no learnin'. Still, my son, it may comfort ye a wee i' the time to come, to think the auld cobbler Anerew Comin gaed intil the new warl' fitter company for the help ye gied him afore he gaed. May the Lord mak a sicht o' use o' ye! Fowk say a heap aboot savin' sowls, but ower aften, I doobt, they help to tak frae them the sense o' hoo sair they're in want o' savin'. Surely a man sud ken in himsel' mair an' mair the need o' bein' saved, till he cries oot an' shoots, 'I *am* saved, for there's nane in h'aven but thee, an' there's nane upo' the earth I desire besides thee! Man, wuman, child, an' live cratur, is but a portion o' thee, whauron to lat the love o' thee rin ower!' Whan a man can say that, he's saved; an' no till than, though for lang years he may hae been aye comin' nearer to that goal o' a' houp, the hert o' the father o' me, an' you, an' Doory, an' Eppy, an' a' the nations o' the earth!"

He stopped weary, but his eyes, fixed on Donal, went on where his voice had ended, and for a time Donal seemed to hear what his soul was saying, and to hearken with content. But suddenly their light went out, the old man gave a sigh, and said:—

"It's ower for this warl', my freen'. It's comin'—the hoor o' darkness. But the thing 'at's true whan the licht shines, is as true i' the dark: ye canna work, that's a'. God 'ill gie me grace to lie still. It's a' ane. I wud lie jist as I used to sit, i' the days whan I men'it fowk's shune, an' Doory happent to tak awa' the licht for a moment;—I wud sit aye luikin' doon throuw the mirk at my wark, though I couldna see a stime o' 't, the alison (*awl*) i' my han' ready to put in the neist steek the moment the licht fell upo' the spot whaur it was to gang. That's hoo I wud lie whan I'm

deein', jist waitin' for the licht, no for the dark, an' makin' an incense-offerin' o' my patience whan I hae naething ither to offer, naither thoucht nor glaidness nor sorrow, naething but patience burnin' in pain. He'll accep' that; for, my son, the maister's jist as easy to please as he's ill to saitisfee. Ye hae seen a mither ower her wee lassie's sampler? She'll praise an' praise 't, an' be richt pleast wi' 't; but wow gien she was to be content wi' the thing in her han'! the lassie's man, whan she cam to hae ane, wud hae an ill time o' 't wi' his hose an' his sarks! But noo I hae a fauvour to beg o' ye—no for my sake but for hers: gien ye hae the warnin', ye'll be wi' me whan I gang? It may be a comfort to mysel'—I dinna ken—nane can tell 'at hasna dee'd afore—nor even than, for deiths are sae different!—doobtless Lazarus's twa deiths war far frae alike!—but it'll be a great comfort to Doory—I'm clear upo' that. She winna fin' hersel' sae lanesome like, losin' sicht o' her auld man, gien the freen' o' his hert be aside her whan he gangs."

"Please God, I'll be at yer comman'," said Donal.

"Noo cry upo' Doory, for I wudna see less o' her nor I may. It may be years 'afore I get a sicht o' her lo'in' face again! But the same Lord 's in her an' i' me, an' we canna far be sun'ert, hooever lang the time 'afore we meet again."

Donal called Doory, and took his leave.

CHAPTER XLVII.

MORVEN HOUSE.

Opposite Morven House was a building which had at one time been the stables to it, but was now part of a brewery; a high wall shut it off from the street; it was dinner-time with the humbler people of the town, and there was not a soul visible, when Donal put the key in the lock of the front door, opened it, and went in: he had timed his entrance so, desiring to avoid idle curiosity, and bring no gathering feet about the house. Almost on tiptoe he entered the lofty hall, high above the first story. The dust lay thick on a large marble table—but what was that?—a streak across it, brushed sharply through the middle of the dust! It was strange! But he would not wait to speculate on the agent! The room to which the earl had directed him was on the first floor, and he

ascended to it at once—by the great oak staircase which went up the sides of the hall.

The house had not been dismantled, although things had at different times been taken from it, and when Donal opened a leaf of shutter, he saw tables and chairs and cabinets inlaid with silver and ivory. The room looked stately, but everything was deep in dust; carpets and curtains were thick with the deserted sepulchres of moths; and the air somehow suggested a tomb: Donal thought of the tombs of the kings of Egypt before ravaging conquerors broke into them, when they were yet full of all such gorgeous furniture as great kings desired, against the time when the souls should return to reanimate the bodies so carefully spiced and stored to welcome them, and the great kings would be themselves again, with the added wisdom of the dead and judged. Conscious of a curious timidity, feeling a kind of awesomeness about every form in the room, he stepped softly to the bureau, applied its key, and following carefully the directions the earl had given him, for the lock was Italian, with more than one quip and crank and wanton wile about it, succeeded in opening it. He had no difficulty in finding its secret place, nor the packet concealed in it; but just as he laid his hands on it, he was aware of a swift passage along the floor without, past the door of the room, and apparently up the next stair. There was nothing he could distinguish as footsteps, or as the rustle of a dress; it seemed as if he had heard but a disembodied motion! He darted to the door, which he had by habit closed behind him, and opened it noiselessly. The stairs above as below were covered with thick carpet: any light human foot might pass without a sound; only haste would murmur the secret to the troubled air.

He turned, replaced the packet, and closed the bureau. If there was any one in the house, he must know it, and who could tell what might follow! It was the merest ghost of a sound he had heard, but he must go after it! Some intruder might be using the earl's house for his own purposes!

Going softly up, he paused at the top of the second stair, and looked around him. An iron-clenched door stood nearly opposite the head of it; and at the farther end of a long passage, on whose sides were several closed doors, was one partly open. From that direction came the sound of a little movement, and then of low voices—one surely that of a woman! It flashed upon him that this must be the trysting-place of Eppy and Forgue. Fearing discovery before he should have gathered his wits, he stepped quietly across the passage to the door opposite, opened it, not without a little noise, and went in.

It was a strange-looking chamber he had entered—that, doubtless, once occupied by the ogre—The Reid Etin. Even in the bewilderment of the moment, the tale he had just heard was so present to him that he cast his eyes around, and noted several things to confirm the conclusion. But the next instant came from below what sounded like a thundering knock at the street door—a single knock, loud and fierce—possibly a mere runaway's knock. The start it gave Donal set his heart shaking in his bosom.

Almost with it came a little cry, and the sound of a door pulled open. Then he heard a hurried, yet carefully soft step, which went down the stair

"Now is my time!" said Donal to himself. "She is alone!"

He came out, and went along the passage. The door at the end of it was open, and Eppy stood in it. She saw him coming, and gazed with widespread eyes of terror, as if it were The Reid Etin himself—waked, and coming to devour her. As he came, her blue eyes opened wider, and seemed to fix in their orbits; just as her name was on his lips, she dropped with a sharp moan. He caught her up, and hurried with her down the stair.

As he reached the first floor, he heard the sound of swift ascending steps, and the next moment was face to face with Forgue. The youth started back, and for a moment stood staring. His enemy had found him! But rage restored to him his self-possession.

"Put her down, you scoundrel!" he said.

"She can't stand," Donal answered.

"You've killed her, you damned spy!"

"Then I have been more kind than you!"

"What are you going to do with her?"

"Take her home to her dying grandfather."

"You've hurt her, you devil! I know you have!"

"She is only frightened. She is coming to herself. I feel her waking!"

"You shall feel me presently!" cried Forgue. "Put her down, I say."

Neither of them spoke loud, for dread of neighbours.

Eppy began to writhe in Donal's arms. Forgue laid hold of her, and Donal was compelled to put her down. She threw herself into the arms of her lover, and was on the point of fainting again.

"Get out of the house!" said Forgue to Donal.

"I am here on your father's business!" returned Donal.

"A spy and informer!"

"He sent me to fetch him some papers."

"It is a lie!" said Forgue; "I see it in your face!"

"So long as I speak the truth," rejoined Donal, "it matters little that you should think me a liar. But, my lord, you must allow me to take Eppy home."

"A likely thing!" answered Forgue, drawing Eppy closer, and looking at him with contempt.

"Give up the girl," said Donal sternly, "or I will raise the town, and have a crowd about the house in three minutes."

"You are the devil!" cried Forgue. "There! take her—with the consequences! If you had let us alone, I would have done my part.—Leave us now, and I'll promise to marry her. If you don't, you will have the blame of what may happen—not I."

"But you will, dearest?" said Eppy in a tone terrified and beseeching.

Gladly she would have had Donal hear him say he would.

Forgue pushed her from him. She burst into tears. He took her in his arms again, and soothed her like a child, assuring her he meant nothing by what he had said.

"You are my own!" he went on; "you know you are, whatever our enemies may drive us to! Nothing can part us. Go with him, my darling, for the present. The time will come when we shall laugh at them all. If it were not for your sake, and the scandal of the thing, I would send the rascal to the bottom of the stair. But it is better to be patient."

Sobbing bitterly, Eppy went with Donal. Forgue stood shaking with impotent rage.

When they reached the street, Donal turned to lock the door. Eppy darted from him, and ran down the close, thinking to go in again by the side door. But it was locked, and Donal was with her in a moment.

"You go home alone, Eppy," he said; "it will be just as well I should not go with you. I must see lord Forgue out of the house."

"Eh, ye winna hurt him!" pleaded Eppy.

"Not if I can help it. I don't want to hurt him. You go home. It will be better for him as well as you."

She went slowly away, weeping, but trying to keep what show of calm she could. Donal waited a minute or two, went back to the front door, entered, and hastening to the side door took the key from the lock. Then returning to the hall, he cried from the bottom of the stair,

"My lord, I have both the keys; the side door is locked; I am about to lock the front door, and I do not want to shut you in. Pray, come down."

Forgue came leaping down the stair, and threw himself upon

Donal in a fierce attempt after the key in his hand. The sudden assault staggered him, and he fell on the floor with Forgue above him, who sought to wrest the key from him. But Donal was much the stronger; he threw his assailant off him; and for a moment was tempted to give him a good thrashing. From this the thought of Eppy helped to restrain him, and he contented himself with holding him down till he yielded. When at last he lay quiet,

"Will you promise to walk out if I let you up?" said Donal. "If you will not, I will drag you into the street by the legs."

"I will," said Forgue; and getting up, he walked out and away without a word.

Donal locked the door, forgetting all about the papers, and went back to Andrew's. There was Eppy, safe for the moment! She was busy in the outer room, and kept her back to him. With a word or two to the grandmother, he left them, and went home, revolving all the way what he ought to do. Should he tell the earl, or should he not? Had he been a man of rectitude, he would not have hesitated a moment; but knowing he did not care what became of Eppy, so long as his son did not marry her, he felt under no obligation to carry him the evil report. The father might have a right to know, but had he a right to know from him?

A noble nature finds it almost impossible to deal with questions on other than the highest grounds: where those grounds are unrecognized, the relations of responsibility may be difficult indeed to determine. All Donal was able to conclude on his way home, and he did not hurry, was, that, if he were asked any questions, he would speak out what he knew—be absolutely open. If that should put a weapon in the hand of the enemy, a weapon was not the victory.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

PATERNAL REVENGE.

No sooner had he entered the castle, where his return had been watched for, than Simmons came to him with the message that his lordship wanted to see him. Then first Donal remembered that he had not brought the papers! Had he not been sent for, he would have gone back at once to fetch them. As it was, he must see the earl first.

He found him in a worse condition than usual. His last drug or combination of drugs had not agreed with him; or he had taken too much, with correspondent reaction: he was in a vile temper. Donal told him he had been to the house, and had found the papers, but had not brought them—had, in fact, forgotten them.

"A pretty fellow you are!" cried the earl. "What, you left those papers lying about where any rascal may find them and play the deuce with them!"

Donal assured him they were perfectly safe, under the same locks and keys as before.

"You are always going about the bush!" cried the earl. "You never come to the point! How the devil was it you locked them up again?—To go prying all over the house, I suppose!"

Donal told him as much of the story as he would hear. Almost immediately he saw whither it tended, he began to abuse him for meddling with things he had nothing to do with. What right had he to interfere with lord Forgue's pleasures! Things of the sort were to be regarded as non-existent! The linen had to be washed, but it was not done in the great court! Lord Forgue was a youth of position: why should he be balked of his fancy! It might be at the expense of society!

Donal took advantage of the first pause to ask whether he should not go back and bring the papers: he would run all the way, he said.

"No, damn you!" answered the earl. "Give me the keys—all the keys—house-keys and all. I should be a fool myself to trust such a fool again!"

As Donal was laying the last key on the table by his lordship's bedside, Simmons appeared, saying lord Forgue desired to know if his father would see him.

"Oh, yes! send him up!" cried the earl in a fury. "All the devils in hell at once!"

His lordship's rages came up from abysses of misery no man knew but himself.

"You go into the next room, Grant," he said, "and wait there till I call you."

Donal obeyed, took a book from the table, and tried to read. He heard the door to the passage open and close again, and then the sounds of voices. By degrees they grew louder, and at length the earl roared out, so that Donal could not help hearing

"I'll be damned soul and body in hell, but I'll put a stop to this! Why, you son of a snake! I have but to speak the word, and you are——well, what——. Yes, I will hold my tongue, but not if he crosses me!—By God! I have held it too long

already!—letting you grow up the damnablest ungrateful dog that ever snuffed carrion!—And your poor father periling his soul for you, by God, you rascal!"

"Thank heaven, you cannot take the title from me, my lord!" said Forgue coolly. "The rest you are welcome to give to Davie! It won't be too much, by all accounts!"

"Damn you and your title! A pretty title, ha, ha, ha!—Why, you infernal fool, you have no more right to the title than the beggarly kitchen-maid you would marry! If you but knew yourself, you would crow in another fashion! Ha, ha, ha!"

At this Donal opened the door.

"I must warn your lordship," he said, "that if you speak so loud, I shall hear every word."

"Hear and be damned to you!—That fellow there—you see him standing there—the mushroom that he is! Good God! how I loved his mother! and this is the way he serves me! But there was a Providence in the whole affair! Never will I disbelieve in a Providence again! It all comes out right, perfectly right! Small occasion had I to be breaking heart and conscience over it ever since she left me! Hang the pinchbeck rascal! he's no more Forgue than you are, Grant, and never will be Morven if he live a hundred years! He's not a short straw better than any bastard in the street! His mother was the loveliest woman ever breathed!—and loved me—ah, God! it is something after all to have been loved so—and by such a woman!—a woman, by God! ready and willing and happy to give up everything for me! *Everything*, do you hear, you damned rascal! I never married her! Do you hear, Grant? I take you to witness; mark my words: we, that fellow's mother and I, were never married—by no law, Scotch, or French, or Dutch, or what you will! He's a damned bastard, and may go about his business when he pleases. Oh, yes! pray do! Marry your scullion when you please! You are your own master—entirely your own master!—free as the wind that blows to go where you will and do what you please! I wash my hands of you. *You'll do as you please*—will you? Then do, and please me: I desire no better revenge! I only tell you once for all, the moment I know for certain you've married the wench, that moment I publish to the world—that is, I acquaint certain gossips with the fact, that the next lord Morven will have to be hunted for like a truffle—ha! ha! ha!"

He burst into a fiendish fit of laughter, and fell back on his pillow, dark with rage and the unutterable fury that made of his being a volcano. The two men had been standing dumb before him, Donal pained for the man on whom this phial of devilish

wrath had been emptied, he white and trembling with dismay—an abject creature, crushed by a cruel parent. When his father ceased, he still stood, still said nothing: power was gone from him. He grew ghastly, uttered a groan, and wavered. Donal supported him to a chair; he dropped into it, and leaned back, with streaming face. It was miserable to think that one capable of such emotion concerning the world's regard, should be so indifferent to what alone can affect a man—the nature of his actions—so indifferent to the agony of another as to please himself at all risk to her, although he believed he loved her, and perhaps did love her better than any one else in the world. For Donal did not at all trust him regarding Eppy—less now than ever. But these thoughts went on in him almost without his thinking them; his attention was engrossed with the passionate creatures before him.

The father too seemed to have lost the power of motion, and lay with his eyes closed, breathing heavily. But by and by he made what Donal took for a sign to ring the bell. He did so, and Simmons came. The moment he entered, and saw the state his master was in, he hastened to a cupboard, took thence a bottle, poured from it something colourless, and gave it to him in water. It brought him to himself. He sat up again, and in a voice hoarse and terrible said:—

"Think of what I have told you, Forgue. Do as I would have you, and the truth is safe; take your way without me, and I will take mine without you. Go."

Donal went. Forgue did not move.

What was Donal to do or think now? Perplexities gathered upon him. Happily there was time for thought, and for prayer, which is the highest thinking. Here was a secret affecting the youth his enemy, and the boy his friend! affecting society itself—that society which, largely capable and largely guilty of like sins, yet visits with such unmercy the sins of the fathers upon the children, the sins of the offender upon the offended! But there is another who visits them, and in another fashion! What was he to do? Was he to hold his tongue and leave the thing as not his, or to speak out as he would have done had the case been his own? Ought the chance to be allowed the nameless youth of marrying his cousin? Ought the next heir to the lordship to go without his title? Had they not both a claim upon Donal for the truth? Donal thought little of such things himself, but did that affect his duty in the matter? He might think little of money, but would he therefore look on while a pocket was picked?

On reflection he saw, however, that there was no certainty the

earl was speaking the truth; for anything he knew of him, he might be inventing the statement in order to have his way with his son! For in either case he was a double-dyed villian; and if he spoke the truth was none the less capable of lying.

CHAPTER XLIX.

FILIAL RESPONSE.

One thing then was clear to Donal, that for the present he had nothing to do with the affair. Supposing the earl's assertion true, there was at present no question as to the succession; before such question could arise, Forgue might be dead; before that, his father might himself have disclosed the secret; while, the longer Donal thought about it, the greater was his doubt whether he had spoken the truth. The man who could so make such a statement to his son concerning his mother, must indeed have been capable of the wickedness assumed! but also the man who could make such a statement was surely vile enough to lie! The thing remained uncertain, and he was assuredly not called upon to act!

But how would Forgue carry himself? His behaviour now would decide or at least determine his character. If he were indeed as honourable as he wished to be thought, he would tell Eppy what had occurred, and set himself at once to find some way of earning his and her bread, or at least to become capable of earning it. He did not seem to cherish any doubt of the truth of what had fallen in rage from his father's lips, for, to judge by his appearance, to the few and brief glances Donal had of him during the next week or so, the iron had sunk into his soul: he looked more wretched than Donal could have believed it possible for man to be—abject quite. It manifested very plainly what a miserable thing, how weak and weakening, is the pride of this world. One who could be so cast down, was hardly one, alas, of whom to expect any greatness of action! He was not likely to have honesty or courage enough to decline a succession that was not his—even though it would leave his way clear to marry Eppy. Whether any of Forgue's misery arose from the fact that Donal had been present at the exposure of his position, Donal could not tell; but he could hardly fail to regard him as a dangerous holder of his secret—one who would be more than ready to take hostile action in the matter! At the same time, such had seemed

the paralyzing influence of the shock upon him, that Donal doubted if he had been, at any time during the interview, so much aware of his presence as not to have forgotten it entirely before he came to himself. Had he remembered the fact, would he not have come to him to attempt securing his complicity? If he meant to do right, why did he hesitate?—there was but one way, and that plain before him!

But presently Donal began to see many things an equivocating demon might urge: the claims of his mother; the fact that there was no near heir—he did not even know who would come in his place; that he would do as well with the property as another; that he had been already grievously wronged; that his mother's memory would be yet more grievously wronged; that the marriage had been a marriage in the sight of God, and as such he surely of all men was in heaven's right to regard it! and his mother had been the truest of wives to his father! These things and more Donal saw he might plead with himself; and if he was the man he had given him no small ground to think, he would in all probability listen to them. He would recall or assume the existence of many precedents in the history of noble families; he would say that, knowing the general character of their heads, no one would believe a single noble family without at least one unrecorded, undiscovered, or well concealed irregularity in its descent; and he would judge it the cruellest thing to have let him know the blighting fact, seeing that in ignorance he might have succeeded with a good conscience.

But what kind of a father was this, thought Donal, who would thus defile his son's conscience! he had not done it in mere revenge, but to gain his son's submission as well! Whether the poor fellow leaned to the noble or ignoble, it was no marvel he should wander about looking scarce worthy the name of man! If he would but come to him that he might help him! He could at least encourage him to refuse the evil and choose the good! But even if he would receive such help, the foregone passages between them rendered it sorely improbable it would ever fall to him to afford it!

That his visits to Eppy were intermitted, Donal judged from her countenance and bearing; and if he hesitated to sacrifice his own pride to the truth, it could not be without contemplating as possible the sacrifice of her happiness to a lie. In such delay he could hardly be praying "Lead me not into temptation:" if not actively tempting himself, he was submitting to be tempted; he was lingering on the evil shore.

Andrew Comin staid yet a week—slowly, gently fading out

into life—darkening into eternal day—forgetting into knowledge itself. Donal was by his side when he went, but little was done or said; he crept into the open air in his sleep, to wake from the dreams of life and the dreams of death and the dreams of sleep all at once, and see them mingling together behind him like a broken wave—blending into one vanishing dream of a troubled, yet, oh, how precious night past and gone!

Once, about an hour before he went, Donal heard him murmur, "When I wake I am still with thee!"

Doory was perfectly calm. When he gave his last sigh, she sighed too, said, "I winna be lang, Anerew!" and said no more. Eppy wept bitterly.

Donal went every day to see them till the funeral was over. It was surprising how many of the town's folk attended it. Most of them had regarded the cobbler as a poor talkative enthusiast with far more tongue than brains! Because they were so far behind and beneath him, they saw him very small!

One cannot help reflecting what an indifferent trifle the funeral, whether plain to bareness, as in Scotland, or lovely with meaning as often in England, is to the spirit who has but dropt his hurting shoes on the weary road, dropt all the dust and heat, dropt the road itself, yea the world of his pilgrimage—which never was, never could be, never was meant to be his country, only the place of his sojourning—in which the stateliest house of marble can be but a tent—cannot be a house, yet less a home. Man could never be made at home here, save by a mutilation, a depression, a lessening of his being; those who fancy it their home, will come, by growth, one day to feel that it is no more their home than its mother's egg is the home of the lark.

For some time Donal's savings continued to support the old woman and her grand-daughter. But ere long Doory got so much to do in the way of knitting stockings and other things, and was set to so many light jobs by kindly people who respected her more than her husband because they saw her less extraordinary, that she seldom troubled him. Miss Carmichael offered to do what she could to get Eppy a place, if she answered certain questions to her satisfaction. How she liked her catechizing I do not know, but she so far satisfied her interrogator that she did find her a place in Edinburgh. She wept sore at leaving Auchars, but there was no help: rumour had been more cruel than untrue, and besides there was no peace for her near the castle. Not once had lord Forgue sought her since he gave her up to Donal, and she thought he had then given her up altogether. Notwithstanding his kindness to her house, she all but hated Donal—perhaps the

more nearly that her conscience told he had done nothing but what was right.

Things returned into the old grooves at the castle, but the happy thought of his friend the cobbler, hammering and stitching in the town below, was gone from Donal. True, the craftsman was a nobleman now, but such he had always been!

Forgue mooned about, doing nothing, and recognizing no possible help save in what was utter defeat. If he had had any faith in Donal, he might have had help fit to make a man of him, which he would have found something more than an earl. Donal would have taught him to look things in the face, and call them by their own names. It would have been the redemption of his being. To let things be as they truly are, and act with truth in respect of them, is to be a man. But Forgue showed little sign of manhood, present or to come.

He was much on horseback, now riding furiously over everything, as if driven by the very fiend, now dawdling along with the reins on the neck of his weary animal. Donal once met him thus in a narrow lane. The moment Forgue saw him, he pulled up his horse's head, spurred him hard, and came on as if he did not see him. Donal shoved himself into the hedge, and escaped with a little mud.

CHAPTER L.

A SOUTH-EASTERLY WIND.

One morning, Donal in the schoolroom with Davie, a knock came to the door, and lady Arctura entered.

"The wind is blowing from the south-east," she said.

"Listen then, my lady, whether you can hear anything," said Donal. "I fancy it is a very precise wind that is wanted."

"I will listen," she answered, and went.

The day passed, and he heard nothing more. He was at work in his room in the warm evening twilight, when Davie came running to his door, and said Arkie was coming up after him. He rose and stood at the top of the stair to receive her. She had heard the music, she said—very soft: would he go on the roof?

"Where were you, my lady," asked Donal, "when you heard it? I have heard nothing up here!"

"In my own little parlour," she replied. "It was very faint, but I could not mistake it."

They went upon the roof. The wind was soft and low, an excellent thing in winds. They knew the paths of the roof better now, and had plenty of light, although the moon, rising large and round, gave them little of hers yet, and were soon at the foot of the great chimney-stack, which grew like a tree out of the house. There they sat down to wait and hearken.

"I am almost sorry to have made this discovery!" said Donal.

"Why?" asked lady Arctura. "Should not the truth be found, whatever it may be? You at least think so!"

"Most certainly," answered Donal. "And if this be the truth, as I fully expect it will prove, then it is well it should be found to be. But I should have liked better it had been something we could not explain."

"I doubt if I understand you."

"Things that cannot be explained so widen the horizon around us! open to us fresh regions for question and answer, for possibility and delight! They are so many kernels of knowledge closed in the hard nuts of seeming contradiction.—You know, my lady, there are stories of certain houses being haunted by a mysterious music presaging evil to the family?"

"I have heard of such music. But what can be the use of it?"

"I do not know. I see not the smallest use in it. If it were of use it would surely be more common! If it were of use, why should those who have it be of the class less favoured, so to speak, of the Lord of the universe, and the families of his poor never have it?"

"Perhaps for the same reason that they have their other good things in this life!" said Arctura.

"I am answered," confessed Donal, "and have no more to say. These tales, if they require of us a belief in any special care over such houses, as if they were more precious in the eyes of God than the poorest cottage in the land, I cast them from me."

"But," said Arctura, in a deprecating tone, "are not those houses which have more influence more important than the others?"

"Surely—those which have more *good* influence. But such are rarely the great houses of a country. Our Lord was not an Asmonaean prince, but the son of a humble maiden, his reputed father a working man."

"I do not see—I should like to understand how that has to do with it."

"You may be sure the Lord took the position in life in which

it was most possible to do the highest good; and without driving the argument—for every work has its own specialty—it seems probable that the true ends of his coming will still be better furthered from the standpoint of humble circumstances, than from that of rank and position."

"You always speak," said Arctura, "as if there were *only* the things Jesus Christ came for to be cared about:—is there *nothing* but salvation worthy a human being's regard?"

"If you give a true and large enough meaning to the word *salvation*, I answer you at once, *Nothing*. Only in proportion as a man is saved, will he do the work of the world aright—the whole design of which is to rear a beautiful blessed family. The world is God's nursery for his upper rooms. Oneness with God is the end of the order of things. When that is attained, we shall do greater things than the Lord himself did on the earth!—But was not that Æolus?—Listen!"

There came a low prolonged wail.

The ladder was in readiness; Donal set it up in haste, climbed to the cleft, and with a sheet of brown paper in his hands, waited the next cry of the prisoned chords. He was beginning to get tired of his position, when suddenly came a stronger puff, and he heard the music distinctly in the shaft beside him. It swelled and grew. He spread the sheet of paper over the opening, the wind blew it flat against the chimney, and the sound instantly ceased. He removed it, and again came the sound. The wind continued, and grew stronger, so that they were able to make the simple experiment until no shadow of a doubt was left: they had discovered the source of the music! By certain dispositions of the paper they were even able to modify it.

Donal descended, and said to Davie,

"I wish you not to say a word about this to any one, Davie, before lady Arctura or I give you leave. You have a secret with us now. The castle belongs to lady Arctura, and she has a right to ask you not to speak of it to *any* one without her permission.—I have a reason, my lady," he went on, turning to Arctura: "will you, please, desire Davie to attend to what I say. I will immediately explain to you, but I do not want Davie to know my reason until you do. You can on the instant withdraw your prohibition, should you not think my reason a good one."

"Davie," said Arctura, "I too have faith in Mr. Grant: I beg you will keep all this a secret for the present."

"Oh surely, cousin Arkie!" said Davie. "—But, Mr. Grant, why should you make Arkie speak to me too?"

"Because the thing is her business, not mine. Run down

and wait for me in my room. Go steadily over the bartizan, mind."

Donal turned again to Arctura.

"You know they say there is a hidden room in the castle, my lady?"

"Do you believe it?" she returned.

"I think there may be such a place."

"Surely if there had been, it would have been found long ago."

"They might have said that on the first report of the discovery of America!"

"That was far off, and across a great ocean!"

"And here are thick walls, and hearts careless and timid!—Has any one ever set in earnest about finding it?"

"Not that I know of."

"Then your objection falls to the ground. If you could have told me that one had tried to find the place, but without success, I would have admitted some force in it, though it would not have satisfied me without knowing the plans he had taken, and how they were carried out. On the other hand it may have been known to many who held their peace about it.—Would you not like to know the truth concerning that too?"

"I should indeed. But would not you be sorry to lose another mystery?"

"On the contrary, there is only the rumour of a mystery now, and we do not quite believe it. We are not at liberty, in the name of good sense, to believe it yet. But if we find the room, or the space even where it may be, we shall probably find also a mystery—something never in this world to be accounted for, but suggesting a hundred unsatisfactory explanations. But, pardon me, I do not in the least presume to press it."

Lady Arctura smiled.

"You may do what you please," she said. "If I seemed for a moment to hesitate, it was only that I wondered what my uncle would say to it. I should not like to vex him."

"Certainly not; but would he not be pleased?"

"I will speak to him, and find out. He hates what he calls superstition, and I fancy has curiosity enough not to object to a search. I do not think he would consent to pulling down, but short of that, I don't think he will mind. I should not wonder if he even joined in the search."

Donal thought with himself it was strange then he had never undertaken one. Something told him the earl would not like the proposal.

"But tell me, Mr. Grant—how would you set about it?" said Arctura, as they went towards the tower.

"If the question were merely whether or not there was such a room, and not the finding of it,——"

"Excuse me—but how could you tell whether there was or was not such a room except by searching for it?"

"By determining whether there was or was not some space in the castle unaccounted for."

"I do not see."

"Would you mind coming to my room? It will be a lesson for Davie too!"

She assented, and Donal gave them a lesson in cubic measure and content. He showed them how to reckon the space that must lie within given boundaries: if then within those boundaries they could not find so much, part of it must be hidden. If they measured the walls of the castle, allowing of course for their thickness and every irregularity, and from that calculated the space they must hold; then measured all the rooms and open places within the walls, allowing for all partitions; and having again calculated, found the space fall short of what they had from the outside measurements to expect; they must conclude either that they had measured or calculated wrong, or that there was space in the castle to which they had no access.

"But," continued Donal, when they had in a degree mastered the idea, "if the thing was, to discover the room itself, I should set about it in a different way; I should not care about the measuring. I would begin and go all over the castle, first getting the outside shape right in my head, and then fitting everything inside it into that shape of it in my brain. If I came to a part I could not so fit at once, I would examine that according to the rules I have given you, take exact measurements of the angles and sides of the different rooms and passages, and find whether these enclosed more space than I could at once discover inside them. —But I need not follow the process farther: pulling down might be the next thing, and we must not talk of that!"

"But the thing is worth doing, is it not, even if we do not go so far as to pull down?"

"I think so."

"And I think my uncle will not object.—Say nothing about it though, Davie, till we give you leave."

That *we* was pleasant in Donal's ears.

Lady Arctura rose, and they all went down together. When they reached the hall, Davie ran to get his kite.

"But you have not told me why you would not have him

speak of the music," said Arctura, stopping at the foot of the great stair.

"Partly because, if we were to go on to make search for the room, it ought to be kept as quiet as possible, and the talk about the one would draw notice to the other; and partly because I have a hope that the one may even guide us to the other."

"You will tell me about that afterwards," said Arctura, and went up the stair.

That night the earl had another of his wandering fits; also all night the wind blew from the south-east.

In the morning Arctura went to him with her proposal. The instant he understood what she wished, his countenance grew black as thunder.

"What!" he cried, "you would go pulling the grand old bulk to pieces for the sake of a foolish tale about the devil and a set of cardplayers! By my soul, I'll be damned if you do!—Not while I'm above ground at least! That's what comes of putting such a place in the power of a woman! It's sacrilege! By heaven, I'll throw my brother's will into chancery rather!"

His rage was such as to compel her to think there must be more in it than appeared. The wilderness of the temper she had roused made her tremble, but it also woke the spirit of her race, and she repented of the courtesy she had shown him: she had the right to make what investigations she pleased! Her father would not have left her the property without good reasons for doing so; and of those reasons some might well have lain in the character of the man before her!

Through all this rage the earl read something of what had sent the blood of the Graemes to her cheek and brow.

"I beg your pardon, my love," he said, "but if he was your father, he was my brother!"

"He *is* my father!" said Arctura coldly.

"Dead and gone and all but forgotten!"

"No, my lord; not for one day forgotten! not for one moment unloved!"

"Ah, well, as you please! but because you love his memory must I regard him as a Solon? 'T is surely no great treason to reflect upon the wisdom of a dead man!"

"I wish you good day, my lord!" said Arctura, very angry, and left him.

But when presently she found that she could not lift up her heart to her father in heaven, gladly would she have sent her anger from her. Was it not plainly other than good, when it came thus between her and the living God! All day at intervals

she had to struggle and pray against it; a great part of the night she lay awake because of it; but at length she pitied her uncle too much to be *very* angry with him any more, and so fell asleep

In the morning she found that all sense of his having authority over her had vanished, and with it her anger. She saw also that it was quite time she took upon herself the duties of a landowner. What could Mr. Grant think of her—doing nothing for her people! But she could do little while her uncle received the rents and gave orders to Mr. Graeme! She would take the thing into her own hands! In the meantime, Mr. Grant should, if he pleased, go on quietly with his examination of the house.

But she could not get her interview with her uncle out of her head, and was haunted with vague suspicions of some dreadful secret about the house belonging to the present as well as the past. Her uncle seemed to have receded to a distance incalculable, and to have grown awful as he receded. She was of a nature almost too delicately impressionable; she not only felt things keenly, but retained the sting of them after the things were nearly forgotten. But then the swift and rare response of her faculties arose in no small measure from this impressionableness. At the same time, but for instincts and impulses derived from her race, her sensitiveness might have degenerated into weakness.

CHAPTER LI.

A DREAM.

One evening, as Donal was walking in the little avenue below the terraces, Davie, who was now advanced to doing a little work without his master's immediate supervision, came running to him to say that Arkie was in the schoolroom and wanted to see him.

He hastened to her.

"A word with you, please, Mr. Grant," she said.

Donal sent the boy away.

"I have debated with myself all day whether I should tell you," she began—and her voice trembled not a little; "but I think I shall not be so much afraid to go to bed if I do tell you what I dreamt last night."

Her face was very pale, and there was a quiver about her mouth: she seemed ready to burst into tears.

"Do tell me," said Donal sympathetically.

"Do you think it very silly to mind one's dreams?" she asked.

"Silly or not," answered Donal, "as regards the general run of dreams, it is plain you have had one that must be minded. What we *must* mind, it cannot be silly to mind."

"I am in no mood, I fear, for philosophy," she rejoined, trying to smile. "It has taken such a hold of me that I cannot get rid of it, and there is no one I could tell it to but you; any one else would laugh at me; but you never laugh at anybody!

"I went to bed as well as usual, only a little troubled about my uncle's strangeness, and soon fell asleep, to find myself presently in a most miserable place. It was like a brick-field—but a deserted brick-field. Heaps of broken and half-burnt bricks were all about. For miles and miles they stretched around me. I walked fast to get out of it. Nobody was near or in sight; there was not a sign of human habitation from horizon to horizon.

"All at once I saw before me a dreary church. It was old, tumble-down, and dirty—not in the least venerable—very ugly—a huge building without shape, like most of our churches. I shrank from the look of it: it was more horrible to me than I could account for; I feared it. But I must go in—why, I did not know, but I must: the dream itself compelled me.

"I went in. It looked as if nobody had crossed its threshold for a hundred years. The pews were mouldering away; the canopy over the pulpit had half fallen, and rested its edge on the book-board; the great galleries had in parts tumbled into the body of the church, in other parts they hung sloping from the walls. The centre of the floor had fallen in, and there was a great, descending slope of earth, soft-looking, mixed with bits of broken and decayed wood, from the pews above and the coffins below. I stood gazing down in horror unutterable. How far the gulf went I could not see. I was fascinated by its slow depth, and the thought of its possible contents—when suddenly I knew rather than perceived that something was moving in its darkness: it was something dead—something yellow-white. It came nearer; it was slowly climbing; like one dead and stiff it was labouring up the slope. I could neither cry out nor move. It was about three yards below me, when it raised its head: it was my uncle, dead, and dressed for the grave. He beckoned me—and I knew I must go; I had to go, nor once thought of resisting. My heart became like lead, but immediately I began the descent. My feet sank in the mould of the ancient dead, soft as if thousands of graveyard moles were for ever burrowing in it, as down and down I went, settling and sliding with the black plane. Then I began

to see the sides and ends of coffins in the walls of the gulf; and the walls came closer and closer as I descended, until they scarcely left me room to get through. I comforted myself with the thought that those in these coffins had long been dead, and must by this time be at rest, nor was there any danger of seeing mouldy hands come out to seize me. At last I saw that my uncle had stopped, and I stood still, a few yards above him, more composed than I can understand."

"The wonder is we are so believing, yet not more terrified, in our dreams," said Donal.

"He began to heave and pull at a coffin that seemed to stop the way. Just as he got it dragged on one side, I saw on the bright silver handle of it the Morven crest. The same instant the lid rose, and my father came out of the coffin, looking alive and bright; my uncle stood beside him like a corpse beside a soul. 'What do you want with my child?' he said; and my uncle cowered before him. He took my hand and said, 'Come with me, my child.' And I went with him—oh, so gladly! My fear was gone, and so was my uncle. He led me up the way we had come down, but when we came out of the hole, instead of finding myself in the horrible church, I was in my own room. I looked round—no one was near! I was sorry my father was gone, but glad to be in my own room. Then I woke—and here was the terrible thing—not in my bed—but standing in the middle of the floor, just where my dream had left me! I cannot get rid of the thought that I really went somewhere. I have been haunted with it the whole day. It is a terror to me—for if I did, where is my help against going again!"

"In God our saviour," said Donal. "—But had your uncle given you anything?"

"I wish I could think so; but I do not see how he could."

"You must change your room, and get mistress Brookes to sleep near you."

"I will."

Gladly would Donal have offered to sleep, like one of his colleys, outside her door, but Mrs. Brookes was the only one to help her.

He began at once to make observations towards determining the existence or non-existence of a hidden room, but in the quietest way, so as to attract no attention, and had soon satisfied himself concerning some parts that it could not be there. Without free scope and some one to help him, the thing was difficult. To guage a building which had grown through centuries, to fit the varying tastes and changing needs of the generations, was in itself

not easy, and he judged it all but impossible without drawing observation and rousing speculation. Great was the chaotic element in the congeries of erections and additions, brought together by various contrivances, and with daringly enforced communication. Open spaces within the walls, different heights in the stories of contiguous buildings, breaks in the continuity of floors, and various other irregularities, he found confusingly obstructive.

CHAPTER LII.

INVESTIGATION.

THE autumn brought terrible storms. Many fishing boats came to grief. Of some, the crews lost everything: of others, the loss of their lives delivered their crews from smaller losses. There were many bereaved in the village, and Donal went about among them, doing what he could, and getting help for them where his own ability would not reach their necessity. Lady Arctura wanted no persuasion to go with him in some of his visits; and the intercourse she thus gained with humanity in its simpler forms, of which she had not had enough for the health of her own nature, was of high service to her. Perhaps nothing helps so much to believe in the Father, as the active practical love of the brother. If he who loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, can ill love God whom he hath not seen, then he who loves his brother must surely find it the easier to love God! Arctura found that to visit the widow and the fatherless in their afflictions; to look on and know them as her kind; to enter into their sorrows, and share the elevating influence of grief genuine and simple, the same in every human soul, was to draw near to God. She met him in his children. For to honour, love, and be just to our neighbour, is religion; and he who does these things will soon find that he cannot live without the higher part of religion, the love of God. If that do not follow, the other will sooner or later die away, leaving the man the worse for having had it. She found her way to God easier through the crowd of her fellows; while their troubles took her off her own, set them at a little distance from her, and so put it in her power to understand them better.

One day after the fishing boats had gone out, rose a terrible storm. Some of them made for the harbour again—such as it

was; others kept out to sea; Stephen Kennedy's boat came ashore bottom upward. His body was cast on the sands close to the spot where Donal dragged the net from the waves. There was sorrow afresh through the village: Kennedy was a favourite; and his mother was left childless. No son would any more come sauntering in with his long slouch in the gloamin'; and whether she would ever see him again—*to know him*—who could tell! For the common belief does not go much farther than paganism in yielding comfort to those whose living loves have disappeared—the fault not of Christianity, but of Christians.

The effect of the news upon Forgue I have some ground for conjecturing: I believe it made him care a little less about marrying the girl, now that he knew no rival ready to take her; and feel also that he had one enemy the less, one danger the less, in the path he would like to take. Within a week after, he left the castle, and if his father knew where he went, he was the only one who did. He had been pressing him to show some appearance of interest in his cousin; Forgue had professed himself unequal to the task at present: if he might go away for a while, he said, he would doubtless find it easier when he returned.

The storms were over, the edges and hidden roots had begun to dream of spring, and Arctura had returned to her own room to sleep, when one afternoon she came to the schoolroom and told Donal she had had the terrible dream again.

"This time," she said, "I came out, in my dream, on the great stair, and went up to my room, and into bed, before I waked. But I dare not ask mistress Brookes whether she saw me——"

"You do not imagine you were out of the room?" said Donal.

"I cannot tell. I hope not. If I were to find I had been, it would drive me out of my senses! I was thinking all day about the lost room: I fancy it had something to do with that."

"We must find the room, and have done with it!" said Donal.

"Are you so sure we can?" she asked, her face brightening.

"If there be one, and you will help me, I think we can," he answered.

"I will help you."

"Then first we will try the shaft of the music-chimney. That it has never smoked, at least since those wires were put there, makes it something to question—though the draught across it might doubtless have prevented it from being used. It may be the chimney to the very room. But we will first try to find out whether it belongs to any room we know. I will get a weight and a cord: the wires will be a plague, but I think we can pass them. Then we shall see how far the weight goes down, and shall know

on what floor it is arrested. That will be something gained: the plane of inquiry will be determined. Only there may be a turn in the chimney, preventing the weight from going to the bottom."

"When shall we set about it?" said Arctura, almost eagerly.

"At once," replied Donal.

She went to get a shawl.

Donal went to the gardener's tool-house, and found a suitable cord. There was a seven-pound weight, but that would not pass the wires! He remembered an old eight-day clock on a back stair, which was never going. He got out its heavier weight, and carried it, with the cord and the ladder, to his own stair—at the foot of which was lady Arctura—waiting for him.

There was that in being thus associated with the lovely lady; in knowing that peace had began to visit her through him, that she trusted him implicitly, looking to him for help and even protection; in knowing that nothing but wrong to her could be looked for from uncle or cousin, and that he held what might be a means of protecting her, should undue influence be brought to bear upon her—there was that in all this, I say, that stirred to its depth the devotion of Donal's nature. With the help of God he would foil her enemies, and leave her a free woman—a thing well worth a man's life! Many an angel has been sent on a smaller errand!

Such were his thoughts as he followed Arctura up the stair, she carrying the weight and the cord, he the ladder, which it was not easy to get round the screw of the stair. Arctura trembled with excitement as she ascended, grew frightened as often as she found she had outstripped him, waited till the end of the ladder came poking round, and started again before the bearer appeared.

Her dreams had disquieted her more than she had yet confessed: had she been taking a way of her own, and choosing a guide instead of receiving instruction in the way of understanding? Were these things sent for her warning, to show her into what an abyss of death her conduct was leading her?—But the moment she found herself in the open air of Donal's company, her doubts and fears vanished for the time. Such a one as he must surely know better than those others the way of the Spirit! Was he not more childlike, more straightforward, more simple, and, she could not but think, more obedient than those? Mr. Carmichael was older, and might be more experienced; but did his light shine clearer than Donal's? He might be a priest in the temple; but was there not a Samuel in the temple as well as an Eli? It was the young, strong, ruddy shepherd, the defender of his flock, who was sent by God to kill the giant! He was too little to wear Saul's

armour; but he could kill a man too big to wear it! Thus meditated Arctura as she climbed the stair, and her hope and courage grew.

A delicate conscience, sensitive feelings, and keen faculties, subjected to the rough rasping of coarse, self-satisfied, unspiritual natures, had almost lost their equilibrium. As to natural conditions no one was sounder than she; yet even now when she had more than begun to see its falsehood, a headache would suffice to bring her afresh under the influence of the hideous system she had been taught, and wake in her all kinds of deranging doubts and consciousnesses. Subjugated so long to the untrue, she required to be for a time, until her spiritual being should be somewhat individualized, under the genial influences of one who was not afraid to believe, one who knew the master. Nor was there danger to either so long as he sought no end of his own, so long as he desired only His will, so long as he could say, "Whom is there in heaven but thee! and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee!"

By the time she reached the top she was radiantly joyous in the prospect of a quiet hour with him whose presence and words always gave her strength, who made the world look less mournful, and the will of God altogether beautiful; who taught her that the glory of the Father's love lay in the inexorability of its demands, that it is of his deep mercy that no one can get out until he has paid the uttermost farthing.

They stepped upon the roof and into the gorgeous afterglow of an autumn sunset. The whole country, like another sea, was flowing from that well of colour, in tidal waves of an ever advancing creation. Its more etherial part, rushing on above, broke on the old roofs and chimneys and splashed its many tinted foam all over them; while through it and folded in it came a cold thin wind that told of coming death. Arctura breathed a deep breath, and her joy grew. It is wonderful how small a physical elevation, lifting us into a slightly thinner air, serves to raise the human spirits! We are like barometers, only work the other way; the higher we go, the higher goes our mercury.

They stood for a moment in deep enjoyment, then simultaneously turned to each other.

"My lady," said Donal, "with such a sky as that out there, it hardly seems as if there could be such a thing as our search to-night! Hollow places, hidden away for evil cause, do not go with it at all! There is the story of gracious invention and glorious gift; here the story of greedy gathering and self-seeking, which all concealment involves!"

"But there may be nothing, you know, Mr. Grant!" said Arctura, troubled for the house.

"There may be nothing. But if there is such a room, you may be sure it has some relation with terrible wrong—what, we may never find out, or even the traces of it."

"I shall not be afraid," she said, as if speaking with herself. "It is the terrible dreaming that makes me weak. In the morning I tremble as if I had been in the hands of some evil power."

Donal turned his eyes upon her. How thin she looked in the last of the sunlight! A pang went through him at the thought that one day he might be alone with Davie in the huge castle, untended by the consciousness that a living light and loveliness flitted somewhere about its gloomy and ungenial walls. But he would not think the thought! How that dismal Miss Carmichael must have worried her! When the very hope of the creature in his creator is attacked in the name of religion; when his longing after a living God is met with the offer of a paltry escape from hell, how is the creature to live! It is God we want, not heaven; his righteousness, not an imputed one, for our own possession; remission, not letting off; love, not endurance for the sake of another, even if that other be the one loveliest of all.

They turned from the sunset and made their way to the chimney-stack. There once more Donal set up his ladder. He tied the clock-weight to the end of his cord, dropped it in, and with a little management got it through the wires. It went down and down, gently lowered, till the cord was all out, and still it would go.

"Do run and get some more," said Arctura.

"You do not mind being left alone?"

"No—if you will not be long."

"I will run," he said—and run he did, for she had scarcely begun to feel the loneliness when he returned panting.

He took the end she had been holding, tied on the fresh cord he had brought, and again lowered away. As he was beginning to fear that after all he had not brought enough, the weight stopped, resting, and drew no more.

"If only we had eyes in that weight," said Arctura, "like the snails at the end of their horns!"

"We might have greased the bottom of the weight," said Donal, "as they do the lead when they want to know what kind of bottom there is to the sea: it might have brought up ashes. If it will not go any farther, I will mark the string at the mouth, and draw it up."

He moved the weight up and down a little; it rested still, and he drew it up.

"Now we must mark off it the height of the chimney above the parapet wall," he said; "and then I will lower the weight towards the court below, until this last knot comes to the wall: the weight will then show us on the outside how far down the house it went inside.—Ah, I thought so!" he went on, looking over after the weight; "—only to the first floor, or thereabouts!—No, I think it is lower!—But anyhow, my lady, as you can see, the place with which the chimney, if chimney it be, communicates, must be somewhere about the middle of the house, and perhaps is on the first floor; we can't judge very well looking down from here, and against a spot where are no windows. Can you imagine what place it might be?"

"I cannot," answered Arctura; "but I could go into every room on that floor without anyone seeing me."

"Then I will let the weight down the chimney again, and leave it for you to see, if you can, below. If you find it, we must do something else."

It was done, and they descended together. Donal went back to the schoolroom, not expecting to see her again till the next day. But in half an hour she came to him, saying she had been into every room on that floor, both where she thought it might be, and where she knew it could not be, and had not seen the weight.

"The probability then is," replied Donal, "that thereabout somewhere—there, or farther down in that neighbourhood—lies the secret; but we cannot be sure, for the weight may not have reached the bottom of the shaft. Let us think what we shall do next.

He placed a chair for her by the fire. They had the room to themselves.

CHAPTER LIII.

MISTRESS BROOKES UPON THE EARL.

They were hardly seated when Simmons appeared, saying he had been looking everywhere for her ladyship, for his lordship was taken as he had never seen him before: he had fainted right out in the half-way room, and he could not get him to.

Having given orders to send at once to Auchars for the doctor, lady Arctura hastened with Donal to the room on the stair. The earl was stretched motionless and pale on the floor. But for a slight twitching in one muscle of the face, they might

have concluded him dead. They tried to get something down his throat, but without success. The men carried him up to his chamber.

He began to come to himself, and lady Arctura left him, telling Simmons to come to the library when he could, and let them know how he was.

In about an hour he came: the doctor had been, and his master was better.

"Do you know any cause for the attack?" asked her ladyship.

"I'll tell you all about it, my lady, so far as I know," answered the butler. "—I was there in that room with him—I had taken him some accounts, and was answering some questions about them, when all at once there came a curious noise in the wall. I can't think what it was—an inward rumbling it was, that seemed to go up and down the wall with a sort of groaning, then stopped a while, and came again. It sounded nothing very dreadful to me; perhaps if it had been in the middle of the night, I mightn't have liked it. His lordship started at the first sound of it, turned pale and gasped, then cried out, laid his hand on his heart, and rolled off his chair. I did what I could for him, but it wasn't like one of his ordinary attacks, and so I came to your ladyship. He's such a ticklish subject, you see, my lady! It's quite alarming to be left alone with him. It's his heart; and you know, my lady—I should be sorry to frighten you, but you know, Mr. Grant, a gentleman with that complaint may go off any moment. I must go back to him now, my lady, if you please."

Arctura turned and looked at Donal.

"We must be careful," he said.

"We must," she answered. "Just thereabout is one of the few places in the house where you hear the music."

"And thereabout the music-chimney goes down! That is settled! But why should my lord be frightened so?"

"I cannot tell. He is not like other people, you know."

"Where else is the music heard? You and your uncle seem to hear it oftener than anyone else."

"In my own room. But we will talk to-morrow. Good night."

"I will remain here the rest of the evening," said Donal, "in case Simmons might want me to help with his lordship."

It was well into the night, and he still sat reading in the library, when Mrs. Brookes came to him. She had had to get his lordship "what he ca'd a cat—something or ither, but was naething but mustard to the soles o' 's feet to draw awa' the bluid."

"He's better the noo," she said. "He's taen a doze o' ane o' thae drogues he's aye potterin' wi'—fain to learn the trade o' livin' for ever, I reckon! But that's a thing the Lord has keepit in 's ain han's. The tree o' life was never aten o', an' never wull be noo i' this warl'; it's lang transplantit. But eh, as to livin' for ever, or I wud be his lordship, I wud gie up the ghost at ance!"

"What makes you say that, mistress Brookes?" asked Donal.

"It's no ilk ane I wud answer sic a queston til," she replied; "but I'm weel assured ye hae sense an' hert eneuch baith, no to hurt a cratur'; an' I'll jist gang sae far as say to yersel', an' 'atween the twa o' 's, 'at I hae h'ard frae them 'at's awa'—them 'at weel kent, bein' aboot the place an' trustit—that whan the fit was upon him, he was fell cruel to the bonnie wife he merriet abro'd an' broucht hame wi' him—til a cauld-hertit country, puir thing, she maun hae thoucht it!"

"How could he have been cruel to her in the house of his brother? Even if he was the wretch to be guilty of it, his brother would never have connived at the ill-treatment of any woman under his roof!"

"Hoo ken ye the auld yerl sae weel?" asked Mrs. Brookes, with a sly glance.

"I ken," answered Donal, direct as was his wont, but finding somehow a little shelter in the dialect, "'at sic a dauchter could ill hae been born to ony but a man 'at—weel, 'at wad at least behave til a wuman like a man."

"Ye're i' the richt! He was the ten'erest-heartit man! But he was far frae stoot, an' was a heap by himsel', nearhan' as mickle as his lordship the present yerl. An' the lady was that prood, an' that dewotit to the man she ca'd her ain, that never a word o' what gaed on cam to the ears o' his brither, I daur to say, or I s' warran' ye there wud hae been a fine steer! It cam, she said—my auld auntie said—o' some kin' o' madness they haena a name for yet. I think mysel' there's a madness o' the hert as weel 's o' the heid; an' i' that madness men tak their women for a property o' their ain, to be han'led ony gait the deevil puts intil them. Cries i' the deid o' the nicht, an' never a shaw i' the mornin' but white cheeks an' reid een, tells its ain tale. I' the en', the puir leddy dee'd, 'at micht hae lived but for *him*; an' her bairnie dee'd afore her; an' the wrangs o' bairns an' women stick lang to the wa's o' the universe! It was said she cam efter him again;—I kenna; but I hae seen an' h'ard i' this hoose what—I s' haud my tongue aboot!—Sure I am he wasna a guid man to the puir wuman!—whan it comes to that, maister Grant.

it's no *my leddy* an' *mem*, but we're a' women thegither! She dee'dna i' this hoose, I un'erstan'; but i' the hoose doon i' the toon—though that's neither here nor there. I wadna won'er but the conscience micht be waukin' up intil him! Some day it maun wauk up. He'll be sorry, maybe, whan he kens himsel' upo' the border whaur respec' o' persons is ower, an' a woman s' a guid 's a man—maybe a wheen better! The Lord 'll set a' thing richt, or han' 't ower til anither!"

CHAPTER LIV.

LADY ARCTURA'S ROOM.

THE next day, when he saw lady Arctura, Donal was glad to learn that, for all the excitement of the day before, she had passed a good night, and never dreamed at all.

"I've been thinking it all over, my lady," he said, "and it seems to me that, if your uncle heard the noise of our plummet so near, the chimney can hardly rise from the floor you searched; for that room, you know, is half-way between the ground-floor and first floor. Still, sound does travel so! We must betake ourselves to measurement, I fear.—But another thing came into my head last night which may serve to give us a sort of parallax. You said you heard the music in your own room: would you let me look about in it a little? something might suggest itself!—Is it the room I saw you in once?"

"Not that," answered Arctura, "but the bedroom beyond it. I hear it sometimes in either room, but louder in the bedroom. You can examine it when you please.—If only you could find my bad dream, and drive it out!—Will you come now?"

"It is near the earl's room: is there no danger of his hearing anything?"

"Not the least. The room is not far from his, it is true, but it is not in the same block; there are thick walls between. Besides he is too ill to be up."

She led the way, and Donal followed her up the main staircase to the second floor, and into the small, curious, ancient room, evidently one of the oldest in the castle, which she had chosen for her sitting-room. Perhaps if she had lived less in the shadow, she might have chosen a less gloomy one: the sky was visible only through a little lane of walls and gables and battle-

ments. But it was very charming, with its odd nooks and corners, recesses and projections. It looked an afterthought, the utilization of a space accidentally defined by rejection, as if every one of its sides were the wall of a distinct building.

"I do wish, my lady," said Donal, "you would not sit so much where is so little sunlight! Outer and inner things are in their origin one; the light of the sun is the natural world-clothing of the truth, and whoever sits much in the physical dark misses a great help to understanding the things of the light. If I were your director," he went on, "I would counsel you to change this room for one with a broad, fair outlook; so that, when gloomy thoughts hid God from you, they might have his eternal contradiction in the face of his heaven and earth."

"It is but fair to tell you," replied Arctura, "that Sophia would have had me do so; but while I felt about God as she taught me, what could the fairest sunlight be to me?"

"Yes, what indeed!" returned Donal. "Do you know," he added presently, his eyes straying about the room, "I feel almost as if I were trying to understand a human creature. A house is so like a human mind, which gradually disentangles and explains itself as you go on to know it! It is no accidental resemblance, for, as an unavoidable necessity, every house must be like those that built it."

"But in a very old house," said Arctura, "so many hands of so many generations have been employed in the building, and so many fancied as well as real necessities have been at work, that it must be a conflict of many natures."

"But where the house continues in the same family, the builders have more or less transmitted their nature, as well as their house, to those who come after them."

"Do you think then," said Arctura, almost with a shudder, "that I inherit a nature like the house left me—that the house is an outside to me—fits my very self as the shell fits the snail?"

"The relation of outer and inner is there, but there is given with it an infinite power to modify. Everyone is born nearer to God than to any ancestor, and it rests with him to cultivate either the *godness* or the selfness in him, his original or his mere ancestral nature. The fight between the natural and the spiritual man is the history of the world. The man who sets right his faults inherited, makes atonement for the sins of those who went before him; he is baptized for the dead, not with water but with fire."

"That seems to me strange doctrine," said Arctura, with tremulous objection.

"If you do not like it, do not believe it. We inherit from our ancestors vices no more than virtues, but tendencies to both. Vice in my great-great-grandfather may in me be an impulse."

"How horrible!" cried Arctura.

"To say that we inherit sin from Adam, horrifies nobody: the source is so far back from us, that we let the stream fill our cisterns unheeded; but to say we inherit it from this or that nearer ancestor, causes the fact to assume its definite and individual reality, and make a correspondent impression."

"Then you allow that it is horrible to think oneself under the influence of the vices of certain wicked people, through whom we come where we are?"

"I would allow it, were it not that God is nearer to us than any vices, even were they our own; he is between us and those vices. But in us they are not vices—only possibilities, which become vices when they are yielded to. Then there are at the same time all sorts of counteracting and redeeming influences. It may be that wherein a certain ancestor was most wicked, his wife was especially lovely. He may have been cruel, and she tender as the hen that gathers her chickens under her wing. The main danger is perhaps, of being caught in some sudden gust of unsuspected impulse, and carried away of the one tendency before the other has time to assert and the will to rouse itself. But those who doubt themselves and try to do right may hope for warning. Such will not, I think, be allowed to go far out of the way for want of that. Self-confidence is the worst traitor."

"You comfort me a little."

"And then you must remember," continued Donal, "that nothing in its immediate root is evil; that from best human roots worst things spring. No one, for instance, will be so full of indignation, of fierceness, of revenge, as the selfish man born with a strong sense of justice.—But you say this is not the room in which you hear the music best?"

"No, it is here."

CHAPTER LV.

HER BED-CHAMBER.

LADY ARCTURA opened the door of her bedroom. Donal glanced round it. It was as old-fashioned as the other.

"What is behind that press there—wardrobe, I think you call it?" he asked.

"Only a recess," answered lady Arctura. "The press, I am sorry to say, is too high to get into it."

Possibly had the press stood in the recess, the latter would have suggested nothing; but having caught sight of the opening behind the press, Donal was attracted by it. It was in the same wall with the fireplace, but did not seem formed by the projection of the chimney, for it did not go to the ceiling.

"Would you mind if I moved the wardrobe a little on one side?" he asked.

"Do what you like," she answered.

Donal moved it, and found the recess rather deep for its size. The walls of the room were wainscotted to the height of four feet or so, but the recess was bare. There were signs of hinges on one, and of a bolt on the other of the front edges: it had seemingly been once a closet, whose door continued the wainscot. There were no signs of shelves in it; the plaster was smooth.

But Donal was not satisfied. He took a big knife from his pocket, and began tapping all round. The moment he came to the right-hand side, there was a change in the sound.

"You don't mind if I make a little dust, my lady?" he said.

"Do anything you please," answered Arctura.

He sought in several places to drive the point of his knife into the plaster; it would nowhere enter it more than a quarter of an inch: here was no built wall, he believed, but one smooth stone. He found nothing like a joint till he came near the edge of the recess: there was a limit of the stone, and he began at once to clear it. It gave him a straight line from the bottom to the top of the recess, where it met another at right angles.

"There does seem, my lady," he said, "to be some kind of closing up here, though it may of course turn out of no interest to us! Shall I go on, and see what it is?"

"By all means," she answered, but turned pale as she spoke.

Donal looked at her anxiously. She understood his look.

"You must not mind my feeling a little silly," she said. "I am not silly enough to give way to it."

He went on again with his knife, and had presently cleared the outlines of a stone that filled nearly all the side of the recess. He paused.

"Go on! go on!" said Arctura.

"I must first get a better tool or two," answered Donal. "Wlil you mind being left?"

"I can bear it. But do not be long. A few minutes may evaporate my courage."

Donal hurried away to get a hammer and chisel, and a pail to put the broken plaster in. Lady Arctura stood and waited. The silence closed in upon her. She began to feel *eerie*. She felt as if she had but to will and see through the wall to what lay beyond it. To keep herself from so willing, she had all but reduced herself to mental inaction, when she started to her feet with a smothered cry: a knock not over gentle sounded on the door of the outer room. She darted to the bedroom-door and flung it to—next to the press, and with one push had it nearly in its place. Then she opened again the door, thinking to wait for a second knock on the other before she answered. But as she opened the inner, the outer door also opened—slowly—and a face looked in. She would rather have had a visitor from behind the press! It was her uncle; his face cadaverous; his eyes dull, but with a kind of glitter in them; his look like that of a housebreaker. In terror of himself, in terror lest he should discover what they had been about, in terror lest Donal should appear, wishing to warn the latter, and certain that, early as it was, her uncle was not himself, with intuitive impulse, the moment she saw him, she cried out,

"Uncle! what is that behind you?"

She felt afterwards, and was very sorry, that it was both a deceitful and cruel thing to do; but she did it, as I have said, by a swift, unreflecting instinct—which she concluded, in thinking about it, came from the ready craft of some ancestor, and illustrated what Donal had been saying.

The earl turned like one struck on the back, imagined something of which Arctura knew nothing, cowered to two-thirds of his height, and crept away. Though herself trembling from head to foot, Arctura was seized with such a pity, that she followed him to his room; but she dared not go in. She stood a moment in the passage within sight of his door, and thought she heard his bell ring. Now Simmons might meet Donal! In a moment or two, however, she was relieved. Donal came round a turn, carrying his implements. She signed to him to make haste, and he was just safe inside her room when Simmons came along on his

way to his master's. She drew the door to, as if she had been just coming out, and said,

"Knock at my door as you return, and tell me how your master is: I heard his bell."

She then begged Donal to go on with his work, but stop it the moment she made a noise with the handle of the door, and resumed her place outside till Simmons should re-appear. Full ten minutes she stood waiting: it seemed an hour. Though she heard Donal at work within, and knew Simmons must soon come, though the room behind her was her own, and familiar to her from childhood, the long empty passage in front of her appeared frightful. What might not come pacing along towards her! At last she heard her uncle's door—steps—and the butler approached. She shook the handle of the door, and Donal's blows ceased.

"I can't make him out, my lady!" said Simmons. "It is nothing very bad, I think, this time; but he gets worse and worse—always taking more and more o' them horrid drugs. It's no use trying to hide it: he'll drop off sudden one o' these days! I've heard say laudanum don't shorten life; but it's not one nor two, nor half a dozen sorts o' laudanums he keeps mixing in that poor inside o' his! The end must come, and what will it be? It's better you should be prepared for it when it do come, my lady. I've just been a giving of him some into his skin—with a little sharp-pointed thing, a syringe, you know, my lady: he says it's the only way to take some medicines. He's just a slave to his medicines, my lady!"

As soon as he was gone, Arctura returned to Donal. He had knocked the plaster away, and uncovered a slab, very like one of the great stones on some of the roofs. The next thing was to prize it from the mortar, and that was not difficult. The instant he drew the stone away, a dank chill assailed them, accompanied by a humid smell, as from a long-closed cellar. They stood and looked, now at each other, now at the opening in the wall, where was nothing but darkness. The room grew cold and colder. Donal was anxious as to how Arctura might stand what discovery lay before them, and she was anxious to read his sensations. For her sake he tried to hide all expression of the awe that was creeping over him, and it gave him enough to do.

"We are not far from something, my lady!" he said. "It makes one think of what He said who carries the light everywhere—that there is nothing covered that shall not be revealed, neither hid that shall not be known. Shall we leave it for the present?"

"Anything but that!" said Arctura with a shiver; "—anything but an unknown terrible something!"

"But what can you do with it?"

"Let the daylight in upon it."

Her colour returned as she spoke, and a look of determination came into her eyes.

"You will not be afraid to be left then when I go down?"

"I am cowardly enough to be afraid, but not cowardly enough to let you go alone. I will share with you. I shall not be afraid —not *much*—not *too* much, I mean—if I am with you."

Donal hesitated.

"See!" she went on, "I am going to light a candle, and ask you to come down with me—if down it be: it may be up!"

"I am ready, my lady," said Donal.

She lighted the candle.

"Had we not better lock the door, my lady?"

"That might set them wondering," she answered. "We should have to lock both the doors of this room, or else both the passage-doors! The better way will be to pull the press after us when we are behind it."

"You are right, my lady. Please take some matches with you."

"To be sure."

"You will carry the candle, please. I must have my hands free. Try to let the light shine past me as much as you can, that I may see where I am going. But I shall depend most on my hands and feet."

CHAPTER LVI.

THE LOST ROOM.

Donal then took the light from her hand, and looked in. The opening went into the further wall and turned immediately to the left. He gave her back the candle, and went in. Arctura followed close.

There was a stair in the thickness of the wall, going down steep and straight. It was not wide enough to let them go abreast.

"Put your hand on my shoulder, my lady," said Donal. "That will keep us together. If I fall, you must stand stock-still."

She put her hand on his shoulder, and they began their descent. The steps were narrow and high, therefore the stair was steep.

They had gone down from thirty to thirty-five steps, when they came to a level passage, turning again at right angles to the left. It was twice the width of the stair. Its sides, like those of the stair, were of roughly dressed stones, and unplastered. It led them straight to a strong door. It was locked, and in the rusty lock they could see the key from within. To the right was another door, a smaller one, which stood wide open. They went through, and by a short passage entered an opener space. Here on one side there seemed to be no wall, and they stood for a moment afraid to move lest they should tumble into darkness. But sending the light about, and feeling with hands and feet, they soon came to an idea of the place they were in. It was a little gallery, with arches on one side opening into a larger place, the character of which they could only conjecture, for nearly all they could determine was, that it went below and rose above where they stood. On the other side was a plain wall, such as they had had on both sides of them.

They had been speaking in awe-filled whispers, and were now in silence endeavouring to send their sight through the darkness beyond the arches.

"Listen, my lady," said Donal.

From above their heads came a chord of the aerial music, soft and faint and wild! A strange effect it had! it was like news of the still airy night and the keen stars, come down through secret ways into the dark places of the earth, from spaces so wide that they seem the most awful of prisons! It sweetly fostered Arctura's courage.

"That must be how the songs of angels sounded, with news of high heaven, to the people of old!" she said.

Donal was not in so high a mood. He was occupied at the moment with the material side of things.

"We can't be far," he said, "from the place where our plummet came down! But let us try a little further."

The next moment they came against a cord, and at their feet was the weight of the clock.

At the other end of the little gallery they came again to a door and again to a stair, turning to the right; and again they went down. Arctura kept up bravely. The air was not so bad as might have been feared, though it was cold and damp. This time they descended but a little way, and came to a landing place, on the right of which was a door. Donal raised a rusty latch and pushed; the door swung open against the wall, dropping from one hinge with the slight shock. Two steps more they descended, and stood on a stone floor.

Donal thought at first they must be in one of the dungeons, but soon bethought himself that they had not descended far enough for that.

A halo of damp surrounded their candle; its weak light seemed scarcely to spread beyond it; for some moments they took in nothing of what was around them. The floor first began to reveal itself to Donal's eye: in the circle of the light he saw, covered with dust as it was, its squares of black and white marble. Then came to him a gleam of white from the wall; it was a tablet; and at the other end was something like an altar, or a tomb.

"We are in the old chapel of the castle!" he said. "—But what is that?" he added instantly with an involuntary change of voice, and a shudder through his whole nervous being.

Arctura turned; her hand sought his and clasped it convulsively. They stood close to something which the light itself had concealed from them. Ere they were conscious of an idea concerning it, each felt the muscles of neck and face drawn, as if another power than their own invaded their persons. But they were live wills, and would not be overcome. They forced their gaze; perception cleared itself; and slowly they saw and understood.

With strangest dream-like incongruity and unfitness, the thing beside them was a dark bedstead, with carved posts and low wooden tester, richly carved!—This in the middle of a chapel!—But there was no speculation in them; they could only see, not think. Donal took the candle. From the tester hung large pieces of stuff that had once made heavy curtains, but seemed hardly now to have as much cohesion as the dust on a cobweb; it held together only in virtue of the lightness to which decay had reduced it. On the bed lay a dark mass, like bed clothes and bedding not quite turned to dust—they could yet see something like embroidery in one or two places—dark like burnt paper or half-burnt flaky rags, horrid as a dream of dead love!

Heavens! what was that shape in the middle?—what was that on the black pillow?—what was that thick line stretching towards one of the head-posts? They stared speechless. Arctura pressed close to Donal. His arm went round her to protect her from what threatened almost to overwhelm himself—the inroad of an unearthly horror. Plain to the eyes of both, the form in the middle of the bed was that of a human body, slowly crumbling where it lay. Bed and blankets and quilt, sheets and pillows had crumbled with it through the long wasting years, but something of its old shape yet lingered with the dust: that was a head that lay on the pillow; that was the line of a long arm that pointed across

the pillow to the post.—What was that hanging from the bedpost and meeting the arm? God in heaven! there was a staple in the post, and from the staple came a chain!—and there at its other end a ring, lying on the pillow!—and through it—yes through it, the dust-arm passed!—This was no mere death-bed; it was a torture-bed—most likely a murder-bed; and on it yet lay the body that died on it—had lain for hundreds of years, unlifted for kindly burial: the place of its decease had been made its tomb—closed up and hidden away!

A bed in a chapel, and one dead thereon!—how could it be? Had the woman—for Donal imagined the form yet showed it the body of a woman—been carried thither of her own desire, to die in a holy place? That could not be: there was the chain! Had she sought refuge there from some persecutor? If so, he has found her! She was a captive—mad perhaps, more likely hated and the victim of a terrible revenge; left, probably enough, to die of hunger, or disease—neglected or tended, who could tell? One thing only was clear—that there she died, and there she was buried!

Arctura was trembling. Donal drew her closer, and would have taken her away. But she said in his ear, as if in dread of disturbing the dust,

"I am not frightened—not *very*. It is only the cold, I think."

They went softly to the other end of the chapel, almost clinging together as they went. They saw three narrow lancet windows on their right, but no glimmer came through them.

They came to what had seemed an altar, and such it still seemed. But on its marble-top lay the dust plainly of an infant—sight sad as fearful, and full of agonizing suggestion! They turned away, nor either looked at the other. The awful silence of the place seemed settling on them like a weight. Donal made haste, nor did Arctura seem less anxious to leave it.

When they reached the stair, he made her go first: he must be between her and the terror! As they passed the door on the other side of the little gallery—down whose spiracle had come no second breath—Donal said to himself he must question that door, but to Arctura he said nothing: she had had enough of inquiry for the moment!

Slowly they ascended to Arctura's chamber. Donal replaced the slab, and propped it in its position; gathered the plaster into the pail; replaced the press, and put a screw through the bottom of it into the floor. Arctura stood and watched him all the time.

"You must leave your room again, my lady!" said Donal.

"I will. I shall speak to mistress Brookes at once."

"Will you tell her all about it?"

"We must talk about that!"

"How will she bear it," thought Donal; "how after such an experience, can she spend the rest of the day alone? There is all the long afternoon and evening to be met!"

He gave the last turn to the screw in the floor, and rose. Then first he saw that Arctura had turned very white.

"Do sit down, my lady!" he said. "I would run for mistress Brookes, but I dare not leave you."

"No, no; we will go down together! Give me that bottle of eau de Cologne, please."

Donal did not know either eau de Cologne or its bottle, but he darted to the dressing-table and guessed correctly. It revived her, and she began to take deep breaths. Then with a strong effort she rose to go down.

The time for speech concerning what they had seen, was not come!

"Would you not like, my lady," said Donal, "to come to the schoolroom this afternoon? You could sit beside while I give Davie his lessons!"

"Yes," she answered at once; "I should like it much!—Is there not something you could give me to do?—Will you not teach me something?"

"I should like to begin you with Greek, and teach you a little mathematics—geometry first of all."

"You frighten me!"

"Your fright wouldn't outlast the beginning," said Donal. "Anyhow, you will have Davie and me for company! You must be lonely sometimes! You see little of Miss Carmichael now, I fancy."

"She has not been near me since that day in the avenue! We salute now and then coming out of church. She will not come again except I ask her; and I shall be in no haste: she would only assume I was sorry, and could not do without her!"

"I should let her wait, my lady!" said Donal. "She sorely wants humbling!"

"You do not know her, Mr. Grant, if you think anything I could do would have that effect on her."

"Pardon me, my lady; I did not imagine it your task to humble her! But you need not let her ride over you as she used to do; she knows nothing really, and a great many things unreally. Unreal knowledge is worse than ignorance.—Would not Miss Graeme be a better friend?"

"She is much more lovable; but she does not trouble her

head about the things I care for.—I mean religion," she added hesitatingly.

"So much the better,—"

"Mr. Grant!"

"You did not let me finish, my lady!—So much the better, I was going to say, till she begins to trouble her *heart* about it—or rather to untrouble her heart with it! The pharisee troubled his head, and no doubt his conscience too, and did not go away justified; but the poor publican, as we with our stupid pity would call him, troubled his heart about it; and that trouble once set a going, there is no fear. Head and all must soon follow.—But how am I to get rid of this plaster without being seen?"

"I will show you the way to your own stair without going down—the way we came once, you may remember. You can take it to the top of the house till it is dark.—But I do not feel comfortable about my uncle's visit. Can it be that he suspects something? Perhaps he knows all about the chapel—and that stair too!"

"He is a man to enjoy having a secret!—But our discovery bears out what we were saying as to the likeness of house and man—does it not?"

"You don't mean there is anything like that in me?" rejoined Arctura, looking frightened.

"*You!*" he exclaimed. "—But I mean no individual application," he added, "except as reflected from the general truth. This house is like every human soul, and so, like me and you and all of us. We have found the chapel of the house, the place they used to pray to God in, built up, lost, forgotten, filled with dust and damp—and the mouldering dead lying there before the Lord, waiting to be made live again and praise him!"

"I said you meant me!" murmured Arctura, with a faint, sad smile.

"No; the time is past for that. It is long since first you were aware of the dead self in the lost chapel; a hungry soul soon misses both, and knows, without being sure of it, that they are somewhere. You have kept searching for them in spite of all persuasion that the quest was foolish."

Arctura's eyes shone in her pale face; but they shone with gathering tears. Donal turned away, and took up the pail. She rose, and guided him to his tower-stair, where he went up and she went down.

CHAPTER LVII.

THE HOUSEKEEPER'S ROOM.

As the clock upon the schoolroom chimney-piece struck the hour, Arctura entered, and at once took her seat at the table with Davie —much to the boy's wonder and pleasure. Donal gave her a Euclid, and set her a task: she began at once to learn it—and after a while so brief that Davie stared incredulous, said,

"If you please, Mr. Grant, I think I could be questioned upon it now."

Less than a minute sufficed to show Donal that she thoroughly understood what she had been learning, and he set her then a little more. By the time their work was over he had not a doubt left that suchlike intellectual occupation would greatly subserve all phases of her health. With entireness she gave herself to the thing she had to do; and Donal thought how strong must be her nature, to work so calmly, and think so clearly, after what she had gone through that morning.

School over, and Davie gone to his rabbits.

"Mistress Brookes invites us to supper with her," said lady Arctura. "I asked her to ask us. I don't want to go to bed till I am quite sleepy. You don't mind, do you?"

"I am very glad, my lady," responded Donal.

"Don't you think we had better tell her all about it?"

"As you think fit. The secret is in no sense mine; it is only yours; and the sooner it ceases to be a secret the better for all of us!"

"I have but one reason for keeping it," she returned.

"Your uncle?"

"Yes; I know he will be annoyed. But there may be other reasons why I should reveal the thing."

"There may indeed!" said Donal.

"Still, I should be sorry to offend him more than I cannot help. If he were a man like my father, I should never dream of going against him; I should in fact leave everything to him he cared to attend to. But seeing he is the man he is, it would be absurd. I dare not let him manage my affairs for me much longer. I must understand for myself how things are going."

"You will not, I hope, arrange anything without the presence of a lawyer! I fear I have less confidence in your uncle than you have!"

Arctura made no reply, and Donal was afraid he had hurt her; but the next moment she looked up with a sad smile, and said,

"Well, poor man! we will not compare our opinions of him: he is my father's brother, and I shall be glad not to offend him. But my father would have reason to be dissatisfied if I left everything to my uncle as if he had not left everything to me. If he had been another sort of man, my father would surely have left the estate to him!"

At nine o'clock they met in the housekeeper's room—low-ceiled, large, lined almost round with oak presses, which were mistress Brookes's delight. She welcomed them as to her own house, and made an excellent hostess.

But Donal would not mix the tumbler of toddy she would have had him take. For one thing he did not like his higher to be operated upon from his lower: it made him feel as if possessed by a not altogether real self. But the root of his objection lay in the teaching of his mother. The things he had learned of his parents were to him his patent of nobility, vouchers that he was honourably descended: of his birth he was as proud as any man. And hence this night he was led to talk of his father and mother, and the things of his childhood. He told Arctura all about the life he had led; how at one time he kept cattle in the fields, at another sheep on the mountains; how it came that he was sent to college, and all the story of sir Gibbie. The night wore on. Arctura listened—did nothing but listen; she was enchanted. And it surprised Donal himself to find how calmly he could now look back upon what had seemed to threaten an everlasting winter of the soul. It was indeed the better thing that Ginevra should be Gibbie's wife!

A pause had come, and he had fallen into a brooding memory of things gone by, when a sudden succession of quick knocks fell on his ear. He started—strangely affected. Neither of his companions took notice of it, though it was now past one o'clock. It was like a knocking with knuckles against the other side of the wall of the room.

"What can that be?" he said, listening for more.

"H'ard ye never that 'afore, maister Grant?" said the housekeeper. "I hae grown sae used til't my ears hardly tak notice o' 't!"

"What is it?" asked Donal.

"Ay, what is't? Tell ye me that gien ye can!" she returned. "It's jist a chappin', an' God's trowth it's a' I ken aboot the same! It comes, I believe I'm safe to say, ilka nicht; but I couldna tak my aith upo' 't, I hae sae entirely drappit peyin' ony attention til't.

There's things aboot mony an auld hoose, maister Grant, 'at'll tak the day o' judgment to explain them. But sae lang as they keep to their ain side o' the wa', I dinna see I need trible my heid aboot them. Efter the experrience I had as a yoong lass, awa' doon in Englan' yon'er, at a place my auntie got me intil—for she kenned a heap o' gran' fowk throuw bein' hersel' sae near conneckit wi' them as hoosekeeper i' the castel here—efter that, I'm sayin,' I wadna need to be that easy scaret?"

"What was it?" said lady Arctura. "I don't think you ever told me."

"No, my dear lady; I wud never hae thocht o' tellin' ye ony sic story sae lang as ye was ower yoong no to be frichtit at it; for 'deed I think they're muckle to blame 'at tells bairns the varra things they're no fit to hear, an' fix the dreid 'afore the sense. But I s' tell ye the noo, gien ye care to hear. It's a some awsome story, but there's something unco fulish-like intil't as weel. I canna say I think muckle 'o craturs 'at trible their heids aboot their heids!—But that's tellin' 'aforehan'!"

Here the good woman paused thoughtful.

"I am longing to hear your story, mistress Brookes," said Donal, supposing she needed encouragement.

"I'm but thinkin' hoo to begin," she returned, "sae as to gie ye a richt haud o' the thing.—I'm thinkin' I canna do better nor jist tell 't as it cam to mysel'!—Weel, ye see, I was but a yoong lass, aboot—weel, I micht be twenty, mair or less, whan I gaed til the place I speak o'. It was awa' upo' the borders o' Wales, like as gien folk ower there i' Perth war doobtfu' whether sic or sic a place was i' the hielan's or the lowlan's. The maister o' the hoose was a yoong man awa' upo' 's traivels, I kenna whaur—somewhaur upo' the continent, but that's a mickle word; an' as he had the intention o' bein' awa' for some time to come, no carin' to settle doon aff han' an' luik efter his ain, there was but ane gey auld wuman to hoosekeep, an' me to help her, an' a man or twa aboot the place to luik efter the gairden—an' that was a'. Hoose an' gairden was to let, an' was intil the han's o' ane o' thae agents, as they ca' them, for that same purpose—to let, that is, for a term o' years. Weel, ae day there cam a gentleman to luik at the place, an' he was sae weel pleased wi' 't—as weel he micht, for eh, it was a bonny place!—aye lauchin' like, whaur this place is aye i' the sulks!—na, no aye! I dinna mean that, my lady, forgettin' at it's yours!—but ye maun own it taks a heap o' sun to gar this auld hoose here luik onything but some dour—an' I beg yer pardon my lady!"

"You are quite right, mistress Brookes!" said Arctura with a

smile. "If it were not for you it would be dour dour.—You do not know, Mr. Grant—mistress Brookes herself does not know how much I owe her! I should have gone out of my mind for very dreariness a hundred times but for her."

"The short an' the lang o' 't was," resumed mistress Brookes, "that the place was let an' the place was ta'en, mickle to the satisfaction o' a' pairties concernt. The auld hoosekeeper, she bein' a fixtur like, was to bide, an' I was to bide as weel, under the hoosekeeper, an' haein' nothing to do wi' the stranger servan's.

"They cam. There was a gentleman o' a middle age, an' his leddy some yoonger nor himsel', han'some but no bonnie—but that has nacthing to do wi' my tale 'at I should tak up yer time wi' 't, an' it growin' some late."

"Never mind the time, mistress Brookes," said Arctura; we can do just as we please about that! One time is as good as another—isn't it, Mr. Grant?"

"I sometimes sit up half the night myself," said Donal. "I like to know God's night. Only it won't do often, lest we make the brain, which is God's too, like a watch that won't go."

"It's sair upsettin' to the wark!" said the housekeeper. "What would the house be like if I was to do that!"

"Do go on, please, mistress Brookes," said Arctura.

"Please do," echoed Donal.

"Sir, an' my lady, I'm ready to sit till the cock's be dune crawin', an' the day dune dawin', to pleasur the ane or the twa o' ye!—an' sae for my true tale!—They war varra dacent, weel-behavet fowk, wi' a fine faimly, some grown an' some growin'. It was jist a fawvour to see sic a halesome clan—frae auchteen or thereawa' doon tu the wee toddlin' lassie was the varra aipple o' the e'e to a' the e'en aboot the place! But that's naither here nor yet there! A' gaed on as a' should gang on whaur the servan's are no ower gran' for their ain wark, nor ower meddlesome wi' the wark o' their neebours; naething was negleckit, nor onything girned aboot; but a' was peace an' hermony, as quo' the auld sang about bonny Kilmeny—that is, till ae nicht.—You see I'm tellin' ye as it cam' to mysel' an' no til anither!

"As I lay i' my bed that nicht—an' ye may be sure at my age I lay nae langer nor jist to turn me ower ance, an' in general no that ance—jist as I was fa'in' asleep, up gat sic a romage i' the servan' ha', straucht 'aneth whaur I was lyin', that I thouc to mysel', what upo' earth's come to the place!—'Gien it bena the day o' judgment, troth it's no the day o' sma' things!' I said. It was as gien a' the cheirs an' tables thegither war bein' routit oot o' their places, an' syne set back again, an' the tables turnt heels

ower heid, an' a' the glaiss an' a' the plate for the denner knockit aboot as gien they had been sae mony hailstanes that warna wantit ony mair, but micht jist lie whaur they fell. I couldna for the life o' me think what it micht betoken, save an' excep' a general frenzy had seized upo' man an' wuman i' the hoose! I got up in a hurry: whatever was gaein' on, I wudna wullin'ly gang wantin' my share o' the sicht! An' jist as I opened my door, wha should I hear but the maister cryin' at the heid o' the stair,—'What, i' the name o' a' that's holy,' says he, 'is the meanin' o' this?' An' I ran til him, oot o' the passage, an' through the swing-door, into the great corridor; an' says I,—''Deed, sir, I was won'erin'! an' wi' yer leave, sir, I'll gang an' see,' I said, gaitherin' my shawl aboot me as weel as I could to hide what was 'aneth it, or raither what wasna 'aneth it, for I hadna that mickle on. But says he, 'No, no, you must not go; who knows what it may be? I'll go myself. They may be robbers, and the men fighting them. You stop where you are.' Sayin' that, he was half-ways doon the stair. I stood whaur I was, lookin' doon an' hearkenin', an' the noise still goin' on. But he could but hae won the len'th o' the hall, whan it stoppit a' at ance an' a'thegither. Ye may think what a din it maun hae been, whan I tell ye the quaiet that cam upo' the heels o' 't jist seemed to sting my twa lugs. The same moment I h'ard the maister cryin' til me to come doon. I ran, an' whan I reached the servan's ha', whaur he stood jist inside the door, I stood aside him an' glowered. For, wad ye believe me! the place was as dacent an' still as ony kirkyard i' the munelicht! There wasna a thing oot o' it's place, nor an air o' dist, nor the sma'est disorder to be seen! A' the things luikit as gien they had sattlet themsel's to sleep as usual, an' had sleepit till we cam an' waukit them. The maister glowert at me, an' I glowert at the maister. But a' he said was,—'A false alarm, ye see, Rose!' What he thoucht I canna tell, but withoot anither word we turnt, an' gaed up the stair again thegither.

"At the tap o' the stair, the lang corridor ran awa' intil the dark afore 's, for the can'le the maister carried flangna licht half to the en' o' 't; an' frae oot o' the mirk on a suddent cam to meet 's a rampaugin' an' a rattlin' like o' a score o' nowt rinnin' awa' wi' their iron tethers aboot their necks—sic a rattlin' o' iron chains as ye never h'ard! an' a groanin' an' a gruntin' jist fearsome. Again we stood an' luikit at ane anither; an' my word! but the maister's face was eneuch to fricht a body o' 'tsel', lat alane the thing we h'ard an' saw naething til accoont for! 'Gang awa' back to yer bed, Rose,' he said; 'this'll never do!' 'An' hoo are ye to help it, sir?' said I. 'That I cannot tell,' answered he; but I wouldn't

for the world your mistress heard it! I left her fast asleep, and I hope she'll sleep through it.—Did you ever hear anything strange about the house before we came?' 'Never, sir,' said I, 'as sure as I stan' here shiverin'!'—for the nicht was i' the simmer, an' warm to that degree! an' yet I was shiverin' as i' the cauld fit o' a fivver; an' my moo' wud hardly consent to mak the words I soucht to frame!

"We stood like mice 'afore the cat for a minute or twa, but there cam naething mair; an' by degrees we grew a kin' o' ashamet, like as gien we had been doobtfu' as to whether we had h'ard onything; an' whan again he said to me gang to my bed, I gaed to my bed, an' wasna lang upo' the ro'd, for fear I wud hear onything mair—an' intil my bed, an' my heid 'aneth the claes, an' lay trim'lin'. But there was nane mair o' 't that nicht, an' I wasna ower sair owercome to fa' asleep.

"I' the mornin' I tellt the hoosekeeper a' aboot it; but she held her tongue in a mainner that was, to say the least o' 't, varra strange. She didna lauch, nor she didna grue nor yet glower, nor yet she didna say the thing was nonsense, but she jist h'ard an' h'ard an' saidna a word. I thoucht wi' mysel', is't possible she disna believe me? but I couldna mak that oot aither. Sae as she heild her tongue, I jist pu'd the bridle o' mine, an' vooed there should be never anither word said by me till ance she spak hersel'. An' I wud sune hae had eneuch o' haudin' my tongue, but I hadna to haud it to onybody but her; an' I cam to the conclusion that she was feart o' bein' speirt questons by them 'at had a richt to speir them, for that she had h'ard o' something 'afore, an' kenned mair nor she was at leeberty to speak aboot.

"But that was only the beginnin', an' little to what followed! For frae that nicht there was na ae nicht passed but some ane or twa disturbit, an' whiles it was past a' bidin.' The noises, an' the rum'lin's, an' abune a' the clankin' o' chains, that gaed on i' that hoose, an' the groans, an' the cries, an' whiles the whustlin', an' what was 'maist waur nor a', the lauchin', was something dreidfu', an' 'ayont believin' to ony but them 'at was intil't. I sometimes think maybe the terror o' 't maks it luik waur i' the recollection nor it was; but I canna keep my senses an' no believe there was something a'thegither by ord'nar i' the affair. An' whan, or lang, it cam to the knowledge o' the lady, an' she was waukit up at nicht, an' h'ard the thing, whatever it was, an' syne whan the bairns war waukit up, an' aye the romage, noo i' this room, noo i' that, sae that the leevin' wud be cryin' as lood as the deid, though they could ill mak sic a din, it was beyond a' beirin', an' the maister made up his min' to flit at ance, come o' 't what micht!

"For, as I oucht to hae tellt ye, he had written to the owner o' the hoose, that was my ain maister—for it wasna a hair o' use sayin' onything further to the agent; he only leuch, an' declaret it maun be some o' his ain folk was playin' tricks upon him—which it angert him to hear, bein' as impossible as it was fause; sae straucht awa' to his lan'lord he wrote, as I say; but as he was travellin' aboot on the continent, he supposed either the letter had not reached him, an' never wud reach him or he was shelterin' himsel' under the idea they wud think he had never had it, no wantin' to move in the matter. But the varra day he had made up his min' that nothing should make him spend another week in the house, for Monday nights were always the worst, there cam a letter from the gentleman, sayin' that only that same hoor that he was writin' had he received the maister's letter; an' he was sorry he had not had it before, but prayed him to put up with things till he got to him, and he would start at the farthest in two days more, and would set the thing right in less time than it would take to tell him what was amiss.—A strange enough letter to be sure! Mr. Harper, that was their butler, told me he had read every word of it! And so, as, not to mention the terrors of the nicht, the want of rest was like to ruin us altogether, we were all on the outlook for the appearance of oor promised deliverer, sae cock-sure o' settin' things straucht again!

"Weel, at last, an' that was in a varra feow days, though they luikit lang to some i' that hoose, he appearit—a nice luikin' gentleman, wi' sae sweet a smile it wasna hard to believe whate'er he tellt ye. An' he had a licht airy w'y wi' him, that was to us oppresst craturs strangely comfortin', ill as it was to believe he could ken what had been goin' on, an' treat it i' that fashion! Hooever,—an' noo, my lady, an' Mr. Grant, I hae to tell ye what the butler told me, for I wasna present to hear for mysel'. Maybe he wouldn't have told me, but that he wasn't an old man, though twice my age, an' seemt to have taken a likin' to me, though it never came to anything; an' as I was always ceevil to any person that was ceevil to me, an' never went farther than was becomin', he made me the return o' talkin' to me at times, an' tellin' me what he knew.

"The young gentleman was to stop an' lunch with the master, an' i' the meantime would have a glass o' wine an' a biscuit; an' pullin' a bunch o' keys from his pocket, he desired Mr. Harper to take a certain one and go to the door that was locked inside the wine-cellar, and bring a bottle from a certain bin. Harper took the key, an' was just goin' from the room, when he h'ard the visitor—though in truth he was more at hame there than any of

us—h'ard him say, 'I'll tell you what you've been doing, sir, and you'll tell me whether I'm not right!' Hearin' that, the butler drew the door to, but not that close, and made no haste to leave it, and so h'ard what followed.

"'I'll tell you what you've been doin',' says he. 'Didn't you find a man's head—a skull, I mean, upon the premises?' 'Well, yes, I believe we did, when I think of it!' says the master; 'for my butler'—an' there was the butler outside a listenin' to the whole tale!—'my butler came to me one mornin', sayin', "Look here, sir! that is what I found in a little box, close by the door of the wine-cellar! It's a skull!" "Oh," said I'—it was the master that was speakin'—'"it'll be some medical student has brought it home to the house!" So he asked me what he had better do with it.' 'And you told him,' interrupted the gentleman, 'to bury it!' 'I did; it seemed the proper thing to do.' 'I hadn't a doubt of it!' said the gentleman: 'that is the cause of all the disturbance.' 'That?' says the master. 'That, and nothing else!' answers the gentleman. And with that, as Harper confessed when he told me, there cam ower him such a horror, that he daured nae longer stan' at the door; but for goin' doon to the cellar to fetch the bottle o' wine, that was merely beyond his human faculty. As it happed, I met him on the stair, as white as a sheet, an' ready to drop. 'What's the matter, Mr. Harper?' said I; and he told me all about it. 'Come along,' I said; 'we'll go to the cellar together! It's broad daylight, an' there's nothing to hurt us!' So he went down.

"'There, that's the box the thing was lyin' in!' said he, as we cam oot o' the wine-cellar. An' wi' that cam a groan oot o' the varra ground at oor feet! We both h'ard it, an' stood shakin' an' dumb, grippin' ane anither. 'I'm sure I don't know what in the name o' heaven it can all mean!' said he—but that was when we were on the way up again. 'Did ye show 't ony disrespec'?' said I. 'No,' said he; 'I but buried it, as I would anything else that had to be putten out o' sight,' An' as we wur talkin' together—that was at the top o' the cellar-stair—there cam a great ringin' at the bell, an' said he, 'They're won'erin' what's come o' me an' their wine, an' weel they may! I maun rin.' As soon as he entered the room—an' this again, ye may see, my leddy an' maister Grant, he tellt me efterwards—'Whaur did ye bury the heid ye tuik frae the cellar?' said his master til him, an' speiredna a word as to hoo he had been sae lang gane for the wine. 'I buried it i' the garden,' answered he. 'I hope you know the spot!' said the strange gentleman. 'Yes, sir, I do,' said Harper. 'Then come and show me' said he.

"So the three of them went oot thegither, an' got a spade; an' luckily the butler was able to show them at once the varra spot. An' the gentleman he howkit up the skull wi' his ain han's, carefu' not to touch it with the spade, an' broucht it back in his han' to the hoose, knockin' the earth aff it with his rouch traivellin' gluves. But whan Harper lookit to be told to take it back to the place where he found it, an' trembled at the thoucht, wonderin' hoo he was to get haud o' me an' naebody the wiser, for he didna want to show fricht i' the day-time, to his grit surprise an' no sma' pleesur, the gentleman set the skull on the chimley-piece. An' as lunch had been laid i' the meantime, for Mr. Heywood—I hae jist gotten a grup o' his name—had to be awa' again direckly, he h'ard the whole story as he waitit upo' them. I suppose they thoucht it better he should hear an' tell the rest, the sooner to gar them forget the terrors we had come throuw.

"Said the gentleman, 'Now you'll have no more trouble. If you do, write to me, to the care o'—so an' so—an' I'll release you from your agreement. But please to remember that you brought it on yourself by interfering, I can't exackly say with *my* property, but with the property of one who knows how to defend it without calling in the aid of the law—which indeed would probably give him little satisfaction.—It was the burying of that skull that brought on you all the annoyance.' 'I always thought,' said the master, 'the dead preferred having their bones buried. Their ghosts indeed, according to Cocker, either wouldna or couldna lie quiet until their bodies were properly buried: where then could be our offence?' 'You may say what you will,' answered Mr. Heywood, 'and I cannot answer you, or preten' to explain the thing; I only know that when that head is buried, these same disagreeables always begin.' 'Then is the head in the way of being buried and dug up again?' asked the master. 'I will tell you the whole story, if you like,' answered his landlord. 'I would gladly hear it,' says he, 'for I would fain see daylight on the affair!' 'That I cannot promise you,' he said; 'but the story, as it is handed down in the family, you shall hear.'

"You may be sure, my leddy, Harper was wide awake to hearken, an' the more that he might tell it again in the hall!

"'Somewhere about a hundred and fifty years ago,' Mr. Heywood began, 'on a cold, stormy night, there came to the hall-door a poor pedlar,'—a travelling merchant, you know, my leddy—'with his pack on his back, and would fain have parted with some of his goods to the folk of the hall. The butler, who must have been a rough sort of man—they were rough times

those—told him they wanted nothing he could give them, and to go about his business. But the man, who was something obstinate, I dare say, and, it may weel be, anxious to get shelter, as much for the nicht bein' gurly as to sell his goods, keepit on beggin' an' implorin' to lat the women-folk at the least luik at what he had broucht. At last the butler, oot o' a' patience wi' the man, ga'e him a great shove awa' frae the door, sae that the poor man fell doon the steps, an' bangt the door to, nor ever lookit to see whether the man gat up again or no.

"'I' the mornin' the pedlar they faund him lyin' deid in a little wud or shaw, no far frae the hoose. An' wi' that up got the cry, an' what said they but that the butler had murdert him! Sae up he was ta'en an' put upo' 's trial for't. An' whether the man was not likit i' the country-side, I cannot tell,' said the gentleman, 'but the cry was against him, and things went the wrong way for him—and that though no one aboot the hoose believed he had done the deed, more than he micht hae caused his death by pushin' him doon the steps. An' even that he could hardly have intendit, but only to get quit o' him; an' likely enough the man was weak, perhaps ill, an' the weicht o' his pack on his back pulled him as he pushed.' Still, efter an' a'—an' its mysel' 'at's sayin' this, no the gentleman, my lady—in a pairt o' the country like that, gey an' lanely, it was not the nicht to turn a fallow cratur oot in! 'The butler was, at the same time, an old and trusty servan',' said Mr. Heywood, 'an' his master was greatly concernt aboot the thing. It is impossible at this time o' day,' he said, 'to un'erstan' hoo such a thing could be—i' the total absence o' direc' evidence, but the short an' the weary lang o' 't was, that the man was hangt, an' hung in irons for the deed.

"'An' noo ye may be thinkin' the ghaist o' the puir pedlar began to haunt the hoose; but naething o' the kin'! There was nae disturbance o' that, or ony ither sort. The man was deid an' buried, whaever did or didna kill him, an' the body o' him that was said to hae killed him, hung danglin' i' the win,' an' naither o' them said a word for or again the thing.

"'But the hert o' the man's maister was sair. He couldna help aye thinkin' that maybe he was to blame, an' micht hae done something mair nor he thoucht o' at the time to get the puir man aff; for he was absolutely certain that, hooever rouch he micht hae been; an' hooever he micht hae been the cause o' deith to the troublesome pedlar, he hadna meant to kill him; it was, in pairt at least, an accident, an' he thoucht the hangin' o' 'im for 't was hard lines. The maister was an auld man, nearhan' auchty, an' tuik things the mair seriously, I daursay,

that he wasna that far frae the grave they had sent the puir butler til afore his time—gien that could be said o' ane whause grave was wi' the weather-cock! An' aye he tuik himsel' to task as to whether he ouchtna to hae dune something mair—gane to the king maybe—for he couldna bide the thoucht o' the puir man that had waitit upon him sae lang an' faithfu', hingin' an' swingin' up there, an' the flesh drappin' aff the banes o' 'im, an' still the banes hingin' there, an' swingin' an' creakin' an cryin'! The thoucht, I say, was sair upo' the auld man. But the time passed, an' I kenna hoo lang or hoo short it may tak for a body in sic a position to come asun'er, but at last the banes began to drap, an' as they drappit, there they lay—at the fut o' the gallows, for naebody caret to meddle wi' them. An' whan that cam to the knowledge o' the auld gentleman, he sent his fowk to gether them up an' bury them oot o' sicht. An' what was left o' the body, the upper pairt, hauden thegither wi' the irons, maybe—I kenna weel hoo, hung an' swung there still, in ilk win' that blew. But at the last, oot o' sorrow, an' respec' for the deid, hooever he dee'd, his auld maister sent quaietly ae mirk nicht, an' had the lave o' the banes taen doon an' laid i' the earth.

"'But frae that moment, think ye there was ony peace i' the hoose? A clankin' o' chains got up, an' a howlin', an' a compleenin' an' a creakin' like i' the win'—sic a stramash a'thegither, that the hoose was no fit to be leevit in whiles, though it was sometimes waur nor ither times, an' some thoucht it had to do wi' the airt the win' blew: aboot that I ken naething. But it gaed on like that for months, maybe years,'—Mr. Harper wasna sure hoo lang the gentleman said—'till the auld man 'maist wished himsel' in o' the grave an' oot o' the trouble.

"'At last ae day cam an auld man to see him—no sae auld as himsel', but ane he had kenned whan they wur at the college thegither. An' this was a man that had travelled greatly, an' was weel learnt in a heap o' things ordinar' fowk, that gies themsel's to the lan', an' the growin' o' corn, an' beasts, ir no likely to ken mickle aboot. He saw his auld freen' was in trouble, an' didna carry his age calm-like as was nat'ral, an' sae speirt him what was the matter. An' he told him the whole story, frae the hangin' to the bangin'. "Weel," said the learnit man, whan he had h'ard a', "gien ye'll tak my advice, ye'll jist sen' an' howk up the heid, an' tak it intil the hoose wi' ye, an' lat it bide there whaur it was used sae lang to be;—do that, an' it's my opinion ye'll hear nae mair o' sic unruly gangin's on." The auld

gentleman tuik the advice, kennin' no better. But it was the richt advice, for frae that moment the romour was ower, they had nae mair o' 't. They laid the heid in a decent bit box i' the cellar, an' there it remaint, weel content there to abide the day o' that jeedgment that'll set mony anither jeedgment to the richt-aboot; though what pleesur could be intil that cellar mair nor intil a hole i' the earth, is a thing no for me to say! So wi' that generation there was nae mair trouble.

"'But i' the coorse o' time cam first ane an' syne anither, wha forgot, maybe leuch at, the haill affair, an' didna believe a word o' the same. But they're but fules that gang again the experrience o' their forbeirs!—what wud ye hae but they wud beery the heid! An' what wud come o' that but an auld dismay het up again! Up gat the din, the rampaugin', the clankin', an' a', jist the same as 'afore! But the minute that, frichtit at the consequences o' their folly, they acknowledged the property o' the ghaist in his ain heid, an' tuik it oot o' the earth an' intil the hoose again, a' was quaiet direc'ly—quaiet as hert could desire.'

"Sae that was the story!

"An' whan the lunch was ower, an' Mr. Harper was thinkin' the moment come whan they would order him to tak the heid, an' him trimlin' at the thoucht o' touchin' 't, an' lay't whaur it was—an' whaur it had sae aften been whan it had a sowl intil 't, the gentleman got up, an' says he til him, 'Be so good,' says he, 'as fetch me my hat-box from the hall.' Harper went an' got it as desired, an' the gentleman took an' unlockit it, an' roon' he turnt whaur he stood, an' up he tuik the skull frae the chimley-piece, neither as gien he lo'ed it nor feared it—as what reason had he to do either?—an' han'let it neither rouchly, nor wi' ony show o' mickle care, but intil the hat-box it gaed, willy, nilly, an' the lid shutten doon upo' 't, an' the key turnt i' the lock o' 't; an' as gien he wad mak the thing richt sure o' no bein' putten again whaur it had sic an objection to gang, up he tuik in his han' the hat-box, an' the contrairy heid i' the inside o' 't, an' awa' wi' him on his traivels, here awa' an' there awa' ower the face o' the globe: he was on his w'y to Spain, he said, at the moment; an' we saw nae mair o' him nor the heid, nor h'ard ever a soon' mair o' clankin', nor girnin', nor ony ither oonholy din.

"An' that's the trowth, mak o' 't what ye like, my leddy an' maister Grant!"

Mistress Brookes was silent, and for some time not a syllable was uttered by either listener. At last Donal spoke.

"It is a strange story, mistress Brookes," he said; "and the stranger that it would show some of the inhabitants of the other

world apparently as silly after a hundred and fifty years as when first they arrived there."

"I can say naething anent that, sir," answered mistress Brookes; "I'm no accoontable for ony inference 'at's to be drawn frae my ower true tale; an' doobtless, sir, ye ken far better nor me;—but whaur ye see sae mony folk draw oot the threid o' a lang life, an' never ae sensible thing, that they could help, done or said, what for should ye won'er gien noo an' than ane i' the ither warl' shaw himsel' siclike. Whan ye consider the heap o' folk that dees, an' hoo there maun be sae mony mair i' the ither warl' nor i' this, I confess for my pairt I won'er mair 'at we're left at peace at a', an' that they comena swarmin' aboot 's i' the nicht, like black doos. Ye'll maybe say they canna, an' ye'll maybe say they come; but sae lang as they plague me nae waur nor oor freen' upo' the tither side o' the wa', I canna say I care that mickle. But I think whiles hoo thae ghaists maun lauch at them that lauchs as gien there was nae sic craturs i' the warl'! For my pairt I naither fear them nor seek til them. I'll be ane wi' them mysel' afore lang!—only I wad sair wuss an' houp to gang in amo' better behavet anes nor them 'at gangs aboot plaguin' folk."

"You speak the best of sense, mistress Brookes," said Donal; "but I *should* like to understand why the poor hanged fellow should have such an objection to having his skull laid in the ground! Why had he such a fancy for his old bones? Could he be so closely associated with them that he could not get on without the plenty of fresh air they got him used to when they hung on the gallows? And why did it content him to have only his head above ground? It is bewildering! We couldn't believe our bones rise again, even if Paul hadn't as good as told us they don't! Why should the dead haunt their bones as if to make sure of having their own again?"

"But," said mistress Brookes, "beggin' yer pardon, sir, what ken ye as to what they think? Ye may ken better, but maybe they dinna; for haena ye jist allooed that sic conduc' as I hae describit is no fit, whaever be guilty o' the same, whether rowdy laddies i' the streets, or craturs ye canna se i' the hoose? *They* may think they'll want their banes by an' by though ye ken better; an' whatever you wise folk may think the noo, ye ken it's no that lang sin' a' body, ay, the best o' folk, thoucht the same; an' there's no a doobt they a' did at the time that man was hangt. An' ye maun min' 'at i' the hoose the heid o' 'im wudna waste as it wud i' the yerd!"

"But why bother about his head more than the rest of his bones?"

"Weel, sir, I'm thinking a ghaist, ghaist though he be, canna surely be i' twa places at ance. He could never think to plague til ilk bane o' finger an' tae was gethert i' the cellar! That wud be houpless! An' thinkin' onything o' his banes, he micht weel think maist o' 's heid, an' keep an e'e upo' that. Nae mony ghaists hae the chance o' seein' sae muckle o' their banes as this ane, or sayin' to themsel's, 'Yon's mine, whaur it swings!' Some ghaists hae a cat-like natur for places, an' what for no for banes? Mony's the story that hoosekeeper, honest wuman, telled me: whan what had come was gane, it set her openin' oot her pack! I could haud ye there a' nicht tellin' ye ane efter anither o' them. But it's time to gang to oor beds."

"It is our turn to tell you something," said lady Arctura; "—only you must not mention it just yet: Mr. Grant has found the lost room!"

For a moment Mrs. Brookes said nothing, but neither paled nor looked incredulous; her face was only fixed and still, as if she were finding explanation in the discovery.

"I was aye o' the min' it was," she said, "an' mony's the time I thoucht I wud luik for't to please mysel'! It's sma' won'er—the soon's, an' the raps, an' siclike!"

"You will not change your mind when you hear all," said Arctura. "I asked you to give us our supper because I was afraid to go to bed."

"You shouldn't have told her, sir!"

"I've seen it with my own eyes!"

"You've been *into* it, my lady?—What—what——?"

"It is a chapel—the old castle-chapel—mentioned, I know, somewhere in the history of the place, though no one, I suppose, ever dreamed the missing room could be that!—And in the chapel," continued Arctura, hardly able to bring out the words, for a kind of cramping of the muscles of speech, "there was a bed! and in the bed the crumbling dust of a woman! and on the altar what was hardly more than the dusty shadow of a baby?"

"The Lord be aboot us!" cried the housekeeper, her well-seasoned composure giving way; "ye saw that wi' yer ain e'en, my lady!—Mr. Grant! hoo could ye lat her leddyship luik upo' sic things!"

"I am her ladyship's servant," answered Donal.

"That's varra true! But eh, my bonny bairn, sic sichts is no for you!"

"I ought to know what is in the house!" said Arctura, with a shudder. "But already I feel more comfortable that you know

too. Mr. Grant would like to have your advice as to what—.—You'll come and see them, won't you?"

"When you please, my lady.—To-night?"

"No, no! not to-night.—Was that the knocking again?—Some ghosts want their bodies to be buried, though your butler——"

"I wouldna wonder!" responded mistress Brookes, thoughtfully.

"Where shall we bury them?" asked Donal.

"In Englan'," said the housekeeper, "I used to hear a heap aboot consecrated ground; but to my min' it was the bodies o' God's handiwark, no the bishop, that consecrated the ground. Whaur the Lord lays doon what he has done wi', wad aye be a sacred place to me. 'I daursay Moses, whan he cam upo' 't again i' the desert, luikit upo' the ground whaur stood the buss that had burned, as a sacred place though the fire was lang oot!—Thinkna ye, Mr. Grant?"

"I do," answered Donal. "But I do not believe the Lord Jesus thought one spot on the face of the earth more holy than another: every dust of it was his father's, neither more nor less, existing only by the thought of that father! and I think that is what we must come to.—But where shall we bury them?—where they lie, or in the garden?"

"Some wud doobtless hae dist laid to dist i' the kirkyard; but I wudna wullin'ly raise a clash i' the country-side. Them that did it was yer ain forbeirs, my leddy; an' sic things are weel forgotten. An' syne what wud the earl say? It micht upset him mair nor a bit! I'll consider o' 't.

Donal accompanied them to the door of the chamber which again they shared, and then betook himself to his own high nest. There more than once in what remained of the night, he woke, fancying he heard the ghost-music sounding its coronach over the dead below.

CHAPTER LVIII.

A SOUL DISEASED.

"PAPA is very ill to-day, Simmons tells me," said Davie, as Donal entered the schoolroom. "He says he has never seen him so ill. Oh, Mr. Grant, I hope he is not going to die!"

"I hope not," returned Donal—not very sure, he saw when he thought about it, what he meant; for if there was so little hope of his becoming a true man on this side of some awful doom, why should he hope for his life here?

"I wish you would talk to him as you do to me, Mr. Grant!" resumed Davie, who thought what had been good for himself must be good for everybody.

Of late the boy had been more than usual with his father, and he may have dropped some word that turned his father's thoughts toward Donal and his ways of thinking: however weak the earl's will, and however dull his conscience, his mind was far from being inactive. In the afternoon the butler brought a message that his lordship would be glad to see Mr. Grant when school was over.

Donal found the earl very weak, but more like a live man, he thought, than he had yet seen him. He pointed to a seat, and began to talk in a way that considerably astonished the tutor.

"Mr. Grant," he began, with not a little formality, "I have known you long enough to believe I know you really. Now I find myself, partly from the peculiarity of my constitution, partly from the state of my health, partly from the fact that my views do not coincide with those of the church of Scotland, and there is no episcopal clergyman within reach of the castle—I find myself, I say, for these reasons, desirous of some conversation with you, more for the sake of identifying my own opinions, than in the hope of receiving from you what it would be unreasonable to expect from one of your years."

Donal held his peace; the very power of speech seemed taken from him: he had no confidence in the man, and nothing so quenches speech as lack of faith. But the earl had no idea of this distrust, never a doubt of his listener's readiness to take any position he required him to take. Experience had taught him as little about Donal as about his own real self.

"I have long been troubled," continued his lordship after a momentary pause, "with a question of which one might think the world must by this time be weary—which yet has, and always will have, extraordinary fascination for minds of a certain sort—of

which my own is one: it is the question of the freedom of the will:—how far is the will free? or how far can it be called free, consistently with the notion of a God over all?"

He paused, and Donal sat silent—so long that his lordship opened the eyes which, the better to enjoy the process of sentence-making, he had kept shut, and half turned his head towards him: he had begun to doubt whether he was really by his bedside, or but one of his many visions undistinguishable by him from realities. Re-assured by the glance, he resumed.

"I cannot, of course, expect from you such an exhaustive and formed opinion as from an older man who had made metaphysics his business, and acquainted himself with all that had been said upon the subject; at the same time you must have expended a considerable amount of thought on these matters!"

He talked in a quiet, level manner, almost without inflection, and with his eyes again closed—very much as if he were reading a book inside him.

"I have had a good deal," he went on, "to shake my belief in the common ideas on such points.—Do you believe there is such a thing as free will?"

He ceased, awaiting the answer which Donal felt far from prepared to give him.

"My lord," he said at length, "what I believe, I do not feel capable, at a moment's notice, of setting forth; neither do I think, however unavoidable such discussions may be in the forum of one's own thoughts, that they are profitable between men. I think such questions, if they are to be treated at all between man and man, and not between God and man only, had better be discussed in print, where what is said is in some measure fixed, and can with a glance be considered afresh. But not so either do I think they can be discussed to any profit."

"What do you mean? Surely this question is of the first importance to humanity!"

"I grant it, my lord, if by *humanity* you mean the human individual. But my meaning is, that there are many questions, and this one, that can be tested better than argued."

"You seem fond of paradox!"

"I will speak as directly as I can: such questions are to be answered only by the moral nature, which first and almost only they concern; and the moral nature operates in action, not discussion."

"Do I not then," said his lordship, the faintest shadow of indignation in his tone, "bring my moral nature to bear on a question which I consider from the ground of duty?"

"No, my lord," answered Donal, with decision; "you bring nothing but your intellectual nature to bear on it so; the moral nature, I repeat, operates only in action. To come to the point in hand: the sole way for a man to know he has freedom is to do something he ought to do, which he would rather not do. He may strive to acquaint himself with the facts concerning will, and spend himself imagining its mode of working, yet all the time not know whether he has any will."

"But how am I to put a force in operation, while I do not know whether I possess it or not?"

"By putting it in operation—that alone; by being alive; by doing the next thing you ought to do, or abstaining from the next thing you are tempted to, knowing you ought not to do it. It sounds childish; and most people set action aside as what will do any time, and try first to settle questions which never can be settled but in just this divinely childish way. For not merely is it the only way in which a man can know whether he has a free will, but the man has in fact no will at all unless it comes into being in such action."

"Suppose he found he had no will, for he could not do what he wished?"

"What he ought, I said, my lord."

"Well, what he ought," yielded the earl almost angrily.

"He could not find it proved that he had no faculty for generating a free will. He might indeed doubt it the more; but the positive only, not the negative, can be proved."

"Where would be the satisfaction if he *could* only prove the one thing and not the other."

"The truth alone can be proved, my lord; how should a lie be proved? The man that wanted to prove he had no freedom of will, would find no satisfaction from his test—and the less the more honest he was; but the man anxious about the dignity of the nature given him, would find every needful satisfaction in the progress of his obedience."

"How can there be free will where the first thing demanded for its existence or knowledge of itself is obedience?"

"There is no free will save in resisting what one would like, and doing what the Truth would have him do. It is true the man's liking and the truth may coincide, but therein he will not *learn* his freedom, though in such coincidence he will always thereafter *find* it, and in such coincidence alone, for freedom is harmony with the originating law of one's existence."

"That's dreary doctrine."

"My lord, I have spent no little time and thought on the sub-

ject, and the result is some sort of practical clearness to myself; but, were it possible, I should not care to make it clear to another save by persuading him to arrive at the same conviction by the same path—that, namely, of doing the thing required of him."

"Required of him by what?"

"By any one, any thing, any thought, with which can go the word *required by*—anything that carries right in its demand. If a man does not do the thing which the very notion of a free will requires, what in earth, heaven, or hell, would be the use of his knowing all about the will? But it is impossible he should know anything."

"You are a bold preacher!" said the earl. "—Suppose now a man was unconscious of any ability to do the thing required of him?"

"I should say there was the more need he should do the thing."

"That is nonsense."

"If it be nonsense, the nonsense lies in the supposition that a man can be conscious of not possessing a power; he can only be not conscious of possessing it, and that is a very different thing. How is a power to be known but by being a power, and how is it to be a power but in its own exercise of itself? There is more in man than he can at any given moment be conscious of; there is life, the power of the eternal behind his consciousness, which only in action can he make his own; of which, therefore, only in action, that is obedience, can he become conscious, for then only is it his."

"You are splitting a hair!"

"If the only way to life lay through a hair, what must you do but split it? The fact, however, is, that he who takes the live sphere of truth for a flat intellectual disc, may well take the disc's edge for a hair."

"Come, come! how does all this apply to me—a man who would really like to make up his mind about the thing, and is not at the moment aware of any very pressing duty that he is neglecting to do?"

"Is your lordship not aware of some not very pressing duty that you are neglecting to do? Some duties need but to be acknowledged by the smallest amount of action, to become paramount in their demands upon us."

"That is the worst of it!" murmured the earl. "I refuse, I avoid such acknowledgment! Who knows whither it might carry me, or what it might not go on to demand of me!"

He spoke like one unaware that he spoke.

"Yes, my lord," said Donal, "that is how most men treat the greatest things! The devil blinds us that he may guide us!"

"The devil!—bah!" cried his lordship, glad to turn at right angles from the path of the conversation; "you don't surely believe in that legendary personage?"

"He who does what the devil would have him do, is the man who believes in him, not he who does not care whether he is or not, so long as he avoids doing his works. If there be such a one, his last thought must be to persuade men of his existence! He is a subject I do not care to discuss; he is not very interesting to me. But if your lordship now would but overcome the habit of depending on medicine, you would soon find out that you had a free will."

His lordship scowled like a thunder-cloud.

"I am certain, my lord," added Donal, "that the least question asked by the will itself, will bring an answer; a thousand asked by the intellect, will bring nothing."

"I did not send for you to act the part of father confessor, Mr. Grant," said his lordship, in a tone which rather perplexed Donal; "but as you have taken upon you the office, I may as well allow you keep it; the matter to which you refer, that of my medical treatment of myself, is precisely what has brought me into my present difficulty. It would be too long a story to tell you how, like poor Coleridge, I was first decoyed, then enticed from one stage to another; the desire to escape from pain is a natural instinct; and that, and the necessity also for escaping my past self, especially in its relations to certain others, have brought me by degrees into far too great a dependence on the use of drugs. And now that, from certain symptoms, I have ground to fear a change of some kind not so far off—I do not of course mean to-morrow, or next year, but somewhere nearer than it was this time, I won't say last year, but say ten years ago—why, then, one begins to think about things one has been too ready to forget. I suppose, however, if the will be a natural possession of the human being, and if a man should, through actions on the tissue of his brain, have ceased to be conscious of any will, it must return to him the moment he is free from the body, that is from the dilapidated brain!"

"My lord, I would not have you count too much upon that. We know very little about these things; but what if the brain give the opportunity for the action which is to result in freedom? What if there should, without the brain, be no means of working our liberty? What if we are here like birds in a cage, with wings, able to fly but not flying about the cage; and what if, when we

are dead, we shall indeed be out of the cage, but without wings, having never made use of such as we had while we had them? Think for a moment what we should be without the senses!"

"We shall be able at least to see and hear, else where were the use of believing in another world?"

"I suspect, my lord, the other world does not need our believing in it to make a fact of it. But if a man were never to teach his soul to see, if he were obstinately to close his eyes upon this world, and look at nothing all the time he was in it, I should be very doubtful whether the mere fact of going a little more dead, would make him see. The soul never having learned to see, its sense of seeing, correspondent to and higher than that of the body, never having been developed, how should it expand and impower itself by mere deliverance from the one best schoolmaster to whom it would give no heed? The senses are, I suspect, only the husks under which are ripening the deeper, keener, better senses belonging to the next stage of our life; and so, my lord, I cannot think that, if the will has not been developed through the means and occasions given in, the mere passing into another condition will set it free. For freedom is the unclosing of the idea which lies at our root, and is the vital power of our existence. The rose is the freedom of the rose tree. I should think, having lost his brain, and got nothing instead, a man would find himself a mere centre of unanswerable questions."

"You go too far for me," said his lordship, looking a little uncomfortable, "but I think it is time to try and break myself a little of the habit—or almost time. By degrees one might, you know,—eh?"

"I have little faith in doing things by degrees, my lord—except such indeed as by their very nature cannot be done at once. It is true a bad habit can only be contracted by degrees; and I will not say, because I do not know, whether anyone has ever cured himself of one by degrees; but it cannot be the best way. What is bad ought to be got rid of at once."

"Ah, but, don't you know? that might cost you your life!"

"What of that, my lord! Life, the life you mean, is not the first thing."

"Not the first thing! Why, the Bible says, 'All that a man hath will he give for his life'!"

"That is in the Bible; but whether the Bible says it, is another thing."

"I do not understand silly distinctions."

"Why, my lord, who said that?"

"What does it matter who said it?"

"Much always; everything sometimes."

"Who said it then?"

"The devil."

"The devil he did! And who ought to know better, I should like to ask!"

"Every man ought to know better. And besides, it is not what a man will or will not do, but what a man ought or ought not to do!"

"Ah, there you have me, I suppose! But there are some things so damned difficult, that a man must be very sure of his danger before he can bring himself to do them!"

"That may be, my lord: in the present case, however, you must be aware that the danger is not to the bodily health alone; these drugs undermine the moral nature as well!"

"I know it: I cannot be counted guilty of many things; they were done under the influence of hellish concoctions. It was not I, but these things working in me—on my brain, making me see things in a false light! This will be taken into account when I come to be judged—if there be such a thing as a day of judgment."

"One thing I am sure of," said Donal, "that your lordship will have fair play. At first, not quite knowing what you were about, you may not have been much to blame; but afterwards, when you knew that you were putting yourself in danger of doing you did not know what, you were as much to blame as if you made a Frankenstein-demon, and turned him loose on the earth, knowing yourself utterly unable to control him."

"And is not that what the God you believe in does every day?"

"My lord, the God I believe in has *not* lost his control over either of us."

"Then let him set the thing right! Why should we draw his plough?"

"He will set it right, my lord,—but probably in a way your lordship will not like. He is compelled to do terrible things sometimes."

"Compelled!—what should compel him?"

"The love that is in him, the love that he is. He cannot let us have our own way to the ruin of everything in us he cares for!"

Then the spirit awoke in Donal—or came upon him—and he spoke.

"My lord," he said, "if you would ever again be able to thank God; if there be one in the other world to whom you would go; if you would make up for any wrong you have ever done; if you

would ever feel in your soul once more the innocence of a child; if you care to call God your father; if you would fall asleep in peace and wake to a new life; I conjure you to resist the devil, to give up the evil habit that is dragging you lower and lower every hour. It will be very hard, I know! Anything I can do, watching with you night and day, giving myself to help you, I am ready for. I will do all that lies in me to deliver you from the weariness and sickness of the endeavour. I will give my life to strengthen yours, and count it well spent and myself honoured: I shall then have lived a life worth living! Resolve, my lord—in God's name resolve at once to be free. Then you shall know you have a free will, for your will will have made itself free by doing the will of God against all disinclination of your own. It will be a glorious victory, and will set you high on the hill whose peak is the throne of God."

"I will begin to-morrow," said the earl feebly, and with a strange look in his eyes. "—But now you must leave me. I need solitude to strengthen my resolve. Come to me again to-morrow. I am weary, and must rest awhile. Send Simmons."

Donal was nowise misled by the easy, postponed consent, but he could not prolong the interview. He rose and went. In the act of shutting the door behind him, something, he did not know what, made him turn his head: the earl was leaning over the little table by his bedside, and pouring something from a bottle into a glass. Donal stood transfixed. The earl turned and saw him, cast on him a look of almost demoniacal hate, put the glass to his lips and drank off its contents, then threw himself back on his pillows. Donal shut the door—not so softly as he intended, for he was agitated; a loud curse at the noise came after him. He went down the stair not only with a sense of failure, but with an exhaustion such as he had never before felt.

There are men of natures so inactive that they cannot even enjoy the sight of activity around them: men with schemes and desires are in their presence intrusive. Their existence is a sleepy lake, which would not be troubled even with the wind of far-off labour. Such lord Morven was not by nature; up to manhood he had led even a stormy life. But when his passions began to yield, his self-indulgence began to take the form of laziness; and it was not many years before he lay with never a struggle in the chains of the evil power which had now reduced him to moral poltroonery. The tyranny of this last wickedness grew worse after the death of his wife. The one object of his life, if life it could be called, was only and ever to make it a life of his own, not the life which God had meant it to be, and had made possible to him. On first

acquaintance with the moral phenomenon, it had seemed to Donal an inhuman and strangely exceptional one; but reflecting, he came presently to see that it was only a more pronounced form of the universal human disease—a disease so deep-seated that he who has it worst, least knows or can believe that he has any disease, attributing all his discomfort to the condition of things outside him; whereas his refusal to accept them as they are, is one most prominent symptom of the disease. Whether by stimulants or narcotics, whether by company or ambition, whether by grasping or study, whether by self-indulgence, by art, by books, by religion, by love, by benevolence, we endeavour after another life than that which God means for us—a life of truth, namely, of obedience, humility, and self-forgetfulness, we walk equally in a vain show. For God alone *is*, and without him we are not. This is not the mere clang of a tinkling metaphysical cymbal; he that endeavours to live apart from God must at length find—not merely that he has been walking in a vain show, but that he has been himself but the phantom of a dream. But for the life of the living God, making him be, and keeping him being, he must fade even out of the limbo of vanities!

He more and more seldom went out of the house, more and more seldom left his apartment. At times he would read a great deal, then for days would not open a book, but seem absorbed in meditation—a meditation which had nothing in it worthy of the name. In his communications with Donal, he did not seem in the least aware that he had made him the holder of a secret by which he could frustrate his plans for his family. These plans he clung to, partly from paternity, partly from contempt for society, and partly in the fancy of repairing the wrong he had done his children's mother. The morally diseased will atone for wrong by fresh wrong—in its turn to demand like reparation! He would do anything now to secure his sons in the position of which in law he had deprived them by the wrong he had done the woman whom all had believed his wife. Through the marriage of the eldest with the heiress, he would make him the head of the house in power as in dignity, and this was now almost the only tie that bound him to the reality of things. He cared little enough about Forgue, but his conscience was haunted with his cruelties to the youth's mother. These were often such as I dare not put on record: they came all of the pride of self-love and self-worship—as evil demons as ever raged in the fiercest fire of Moloch. In the madness with which they possessed him, he had inflicted upon her not only sorest humiliations, but bodily tortures: he would see, he said, what she would bear for his sake! In the horrible

presentments of his drug-procured dreams they returned upon him in terrible forms of righteous retaliation. And now, though to himself he was constantly denying a life beyond, the conviction had begun to visit and overwhelm him that he must one day meet her again: fain then would he be armed with something which for her sake he had done for her children! One of the horrible laws of the false existence he led was that, for the deadening of the mind to any evil, there was no necessity it should be done and done again; it had but to be presented in the form of a thing done, or a thing going to be done, to seem a thing reasonable and doable. In his being, a world of false appearances had taken the place of reality; a creation of his own had displaced the creation of the essential Life, by whose power alone he himself falsely created; and in this world he was the dupe of his own home-born phantoms. Out of this conspiracy of marsh and mirage, what vile things might not issue! Over such a chaos the devil has power all but creative. He cannot in truth create, but he can with the degenerate created work moral horrors too hideous to be analogized by any of the horrors of the unperfected animal world. Such are being constantly produced in human society; many of them die in the darkness in which they are generated; now and then one issues, blasting the public day with its hideous glare. Because they are seldom seen, many deny they exist, or need be spoken of if they do. But to terrify a man at the possibilities of his neglected nature, is to do something towards the redemption of that nature.

School-hours were over, but Davie was seated where he had left him, still working. At sight of him Donal, feeling as if he had just come from the presence of the damned, almost burst into tears. A moment more and Arctura entered: it was as if the roof of hell gave way, and the blue sky of the eternal came pouring in heavenly deluge through the ruined vault.

"I have been to call upon Sophia," she said.

"I am glad to hear it," answered Donal: any news from an outer world of yet salvable humanity was welcome as summer to a land of ice.

"Yes," she said; "I am able to go and see her now, because I am no longer afraid of her—partly, I think, because I no longer care what she thinks of me. Her power over me is gone."

"And will never return," said Donal, "while you keep close to the master. With him you need no human being to set you right, and will allow no human being to set you wrong; you will need neither friend nor minister nor church, though all will help you. I am very glad, for something seems to tell me I shall not be long here."

Arctura dropped on a chair—pale as rosy before.

"Has anything fresh happened?" she asked, in a low voice that did not sound like hers. "Surely you will not leave me while—.—I thought—I thought—.—What is it?"

"It is only a feeling I have," he answered. "I believe I am out of spirits."

"I never saw you so before!" said Arctura. "I hope you are not going to be ill."

"Oh, no; it is not that! I will tell you some day, but I cannot now. All is in God's hands!"

She looked anxiously at him, but did not ask him any question more. She proposed they should take a turn in the park, and his gloom wore gradually off.

CHAPTER LIX.

DUST TO DUST.

THE next night, as if by a common understanding, for it was without word spoken, the three met again in the housekeeper's room, where she had supper waiting. Of business nothing was said until that was over. Mistress Brookes told them two or three of the stories of which she had so many, and Donal recounted one or two of those that floated about his country-side.

"I've been thinkin'," said mistress Brookes at length, "seein' it's a bonny starry nicht, we couldna do better than lift an' lay doon this varra nicht. The hoose is asleep."

"What do you say to that place in the park where was once a mausoleum?" said Donal.

"It's the varra place!—an' the sooner the better—dinna ye think, my lady?"

Arctura with a look referred the question to Donal.

"Surely," he answered. "But will there not be some preparations to make?"

"There's no need o' mony!" returned the housekeeper. "I'll get a fine auld sheet, an' intil 't we'll put the remains, an' row them up, an' carry them to their hame. I'll go an' get it, my lady.—But wouldna 't be better for you and me, sir, to get a' that dune by oorsel's? My leddy could j'in us whan we cam up."

"She wouldn't like to be left here alone. There is nothing to be called fearsome!"

"Nothing at all," said Arctura.

"The forces of nature," said Donal, "are constantly at work to destroy the dreadful, and restore the wholesome. It is but a few handfuls of clean dust."

The housekeeper went to one of her presses, and brought out a sheet. Donal put a plaid round lady Arctura. They went up to her room, and so down to the chapel. Half-way down the narrow descent mistress Brookes murmured, "Eh, sirs!" and said no more.

Each carried a light, and the two could see the chapel better. A stately little place it was: when the windows were unmasked, it would be beautiful!

They stood for some moments by the side of the bed, regarding in silence. Seldom sure had bed borne one who slept so long!—one who, never waking, might lie there still! When they spoke it was in whispers.

"How are we to manage it, mistress Brookes?" said Donal.

"Lay the sheet handy, alang the side o' the bed, maister Grant, an' I s' lay in the dist, han'fu' by han'fu' I hae that respec' for the deid, I hae no difficlety aboot han'lin' onything belongin' to them."

"Gien it hadna been that he tuik it again," said Donal, "the Lord's ain body wad hae come to this."

As he spoke he laid the sheet on the bed, and began to lay in it the dry dust and air-wasted bones, handling them as reverently as if the spirit had but just departed. Mistress Brookes would have prevented Arctura, but she insisted on having her share in the burying of her own: who they were God knew, but they should be hers anyhow, and one day she would know! For to fancy we go into the other world a set of spiritual moles burrowing in the dark of a new and unknown existence, is worthy only of such as have a lifeless Law to their sire. We shall enter it as children with a history, as children going home to a long line of living ancestors, to develop closest relations with them. She would yet talk, live face to face, with those whose dust she was now lifting in her two hands to restore it to its dust. Then they carried the sheet to the altar, and thence swept into it every little particle, back to its mother dust. That done, Donal knotted the sheet together, and they began to look around them.

Desirous of discovering where the main entrance to the chapel had been, Donal spied under the windows a second door, and opened it with difficulty. It disclosed a passage below the stair, three steps lower than the floor of the chapel, parallel with the wall, and turning at right angles under the gallery. Here he saw

signs of an obliterated door in the outer wall, but could examine no farther for the present.

In the meantime his companions had made another sort of discovery: near the foot of the bed was a little table, on which were two drinking vessels, apparently of pewter, and a mouldering pack of cards! Card-playing and the hidden room did hold some relation with each other! The cards and the devil were real!

Donal took up the sheet—a light burden, and Arctura led the way. Arrived at her room, they went softly across to the door opening on Donal's stair—not without fear of the earl, whom indeed they might meet anywhere—and by that descending, reached the open air, and took their way down the terraces and through the park to the place of burial.

It was a frosty night, with the waning sickle of a moon low in the heaven, and many brilliant stars above it. Followed by faint ethereal shadows, they passed over the grass, through the ghostly luminous dusk—of funereal processions one of the strangest that ever sought a tomb.

The ruin was in a hollow, surrounded by trees. Donal removed a number of fallen stones and dug a grave. They lowered into it the knotted sheet, threw in the earth again, heaped the stones above, and left the dust with its dust. Then silent they went back, straight along the green, moon-regarded rather than moon-lit grass: if any one had seen them through the pale starry night, he would surely have taken them for a procession of the dead themselves!

No dream of death sought Arctura that night, but in the morning she woke suddenly from one of disembodied delight.

CHAPTER LX.

A LESSON ABOUT DEATH.

WHATEVER lady Arctura might decide concerning the restoration of the chapel to the light of day, Donal thought it would not be amiss to find, without troubling her, what he could of its relation to the rest of the house: and it favoured his wish that Arctura was prevailed upon by the housekeeper to remain in bed the next day. Her strong will, good courage, and trusting heart, had made severe demands upon an organization as delicate as

responsive. It was now Saturday: he resolved to go alone in the afternoon to explore—and first of all would try the door beside the little gallery.

As soon as he was free, he got the tools he judged necessary, and went down.

The door was of strong sound oak, with ornate iron hinges right across it. He was on the better side for opening it, that is, the inside, but though the ends of the hinges were exposed, the door was so well within the frame that it was useless to think of heaving them off the bearing-pins. The huge lock and its bolt were likewise before him, but the key was in the lock from the other side, so that it could not be picked; while the nails that fastened it to the door were probably riveted through a plate. But there was the socket into which the bolt shot! that was merely an iron staple! he might either force it out with a lever, or file it through! Having removed the roughest of the rust with which it was caked, and so reduced its thickness considerably, he set himself to the task of filing it through, first at the top then at the bottom. It was a slow but a sure process, and would make no great noise.

Although it was broad daylight outside, so like midnight was it here and the season that belongs to the dead, that he was haunted with the idea of a presence behind him. But not once did he turn his head to see, for he knew that if he yielded to the inclination, it would but return the stronger. Old experience had taught him that the way to meet the horrors of the fancy is to refuse them a single hair's-breadth of obedience. And as he worked the conviction grew that the only protection against the terrors of alien presence is the consciousness of the home presence of the eternal: if a man felt that presence, how could he fear any other? But for those who are not one with the source of being, every manifestation of that being in a life other than their own, must be more or less a terror to them; it is alien, antipathous, *other*,—it may be unappeasable, implacable. The time must even come when to such their own being will be a horror of repugnant consciousness; for God not self is ours—his being, not our own, is our home; he is our kind.

The work was slow—the impression on the hard iron of the worn file so weak that he was often on the point of giving up the attempt. Fatigue at length began to invade him, and therewith the sense of his situation grew more keen: great weariness overcomes terror; the beginnings of weariness enhance it. Every now and then he would stop, thinking he heard the cry of a child, only to recognize it as the noise of his file. He resolved at last

to stop for the night, and after tea go to the town to buy a new and fitter file.

The next day was Sunday, and in the afternoon Donal and Davie were walking in the old avenue together. They had been to church, and had heard a dull sermon on the most stirring fact next to the resurrection of the Lord himself—his raising of Lazarus. The whole aspect of the thing, as presented by the preaching man, was so dull and unreal, that not a word on the subject had passed between them on the way home.

"Mr. Grant, how *could* anybody make a dead man live again?" said Davie suddenly.

"I don't know, Davie," answered Donal. "If I could know how, I should probably be able to do it myself."

"It is very hard to believe."

"Yes, very hard—that is, if you do not know anything about the person said to have done it, to account for *his* being able to do it though another could not. But just think of this: if one had never seen or heard about death, it would be as hard, perhaps harder, to believe that anything could bring about that change. The one seems to us easy to understand, because we are familiar with it; if we had seen the other take place a few times, we should see in it nothing too strange, nothing indeed but what was to be expected in certain circumstances."

"But that is not enough to prove it ever did take place."

"Assuredly not. It cannot even make it look in the least probable."

"Tell me, please, anything that would make it look probable."

"I will not answer your question directly, but I will answer it. Listen, Davie.

"In all ages men have longed to see God—some men in a grand way. At last, according to the story of the gospel, the time came when it was fit that the Father of men should show himself to them in his son, the one perfect man, who was his very image. So Jesus came to them. But many would not believe he was the son of God, for they knew God so little that they did not see how like he was to his Father. Others, who were more like God themselves, and so knew God better, did think him the son of God, though they were not pleased that he did not make more show. His object was, not to rule over them, but to make them know, and trust, and obey his Father, who was everything to him. Now when anyone died, his friends were so miserable over him that they hardly thought about God, and took no comfort from him. They said the dead man would rise again at the last day, but that was so far off, the

dead was gone to such a distance, that they did not care for that. Jesus wanted to make them know and feel that the dead were alive all the time, and could not be far away, seeing they were all with God in whom we live; that they had not lost them though they could not see them, for they were quite within his reach—as much so as ever; that they were just as safe with, and as well looked after by his father and their father, as they had ever been in all their lives. It was no doubt a dreadful-looking thing to have them put in a hole, and waste away to dust, but they were not therefore gone out—they were only gone in! To teach them all this he did not say much, but just called one or two of them back for a while. Of course Lazarus was going to die again, but can you think his two sisters either loved him less, or wept as much over him the next time he died?"

"No; it would have been foolish."

"Well, if you think about it, you will see that no one who believes that story, and weeps as they did the first time, can escape reproof. Where Jesus called Lazarus from, there are his friends, and there are they waiting for him! Now, I ask you, Davie, was it worth while for Jesus to do this for us? Is not the great misery of our life, that those dear to us die? Was it, I say, a thing worth doing, to let us see that they are alive with God all the time, and can be produced any moment he pleases?"

"Surely it was, sir! It *ought* to take away all the misery!"

"Then it was a natural thing to do; and it is a reasonable thing to think that it was done. It was natural that God should want to let his children see him; and natural he should let them know that he still saw and cared for those they had lost sight of. The whole thing seems to me reasonable; I can believe it. It implies indeed a world of things of which we know nothing; but that is for, not against it, seeing such a world we need; and if anyone insists on believing nothing but what he has seen something like, I leave him to his misery and the mercy of God."

If the world had been so made that men could easily believe in the maker of it, it would not have been a world worth any man's living in, neither would the God that made such a world, and so revealed himself to such people, be worth believing in. God alone knows what life is enough for us to live—what life is worth his and our while; we may be sure he is labouring to make it ours. He would have it as full, as lovely, as grand, as the sparing of nothing, not even his own son, can render it. If we would only let him have his own way with us! If we do not trust him, will not work with him, are always thwarting his endeavours to make us alive, then we must be miserable; there is no help for it. As to death,

we know next to nothing about it. "Do we not!" say the faithless. "Do we not know the darkness, the emptiness, the tears, the sinkings of heart, the desolation!" Yes, you know those; but those are your things, not death's. About death you know nothing. God has told us only that the dead are alive to him, and that one day they will be alive again to us. The world beyond the gates of death is, I suspect, a far more homelike place to those that enter it, than this world is to us.

"I don't like death," said Davie, after a silence.

"I don't want you to like what you call death, for that is not the thing itself—it is only your fancy about it. You need not think about it at all. The way to get ready for it is to live, that is, to do what you have to do."

"But I do not want to get ready for it. I don't want to go to it; and to prepare for it is like going straight into it!"

"You have to go to it whether you prepare for it or not. You cannot help going to it. But it must be like this world, seeing the only way to prepare for it is to do the thing God gives us to do."

"Aren't you afraid of death, Mr. Grant?"

"No, I am not. Why should I fear the best thing that, in its time, can come to me? Neither will you be afraid when it comes. It is not the dreadful thing it looks."

"Why should it look dreadful if it is not dreadful?"

"That is a very proper question. It looks dreadful, and must look dreadful, to everyone who cannot see in it that which alone makes life not dreadful. If you saw a great dark cloak coming along the road as if it were round somebody, but nobody inside it, you would be frightened—would you not?"

"Indeed I should. It would be awful!"

"It would. But if you spied inside the cloak, and making it come towards you, the most beautiful loving face you ever saw—of a man carrying in his arms a little child—and saw the child clinging to him, and looking in his face with a blessed smile, would you be frightened at the black cloak?"

"No; that would be silly."

"You have your answer! The thing that makes death look so fearful is that we do not see inside it. Those who see only the black cloak, and think it is moving along of itself, may well be frightened; but those who see the face inside the cloak, would be fools indeed to be frightened! Before Jesus came, people lived in great misery about death; but after he rose again, those who believed in him always talked of dying as falling asleep; and I daresay the story of Lazarus, though it was not such a great thing

after the rising of the Lord himself, had a large share in enabling them to think that way about it."

When they went home, Davie, running up to lady Arctura's room, recounted to her as well as he could the conversation he had just had with Mr. Grant.

"Oh, Arkie!" he said, "to hear him talk, you would think Death hadn't a leg to stand upon!"

Arctura smiled; but it was a smile through a cloud of unshed tears. Lovely as death might be, she would like to get the good of this world before going to the next!—As if God would deny us any good!—At one time she had been willing to go, she thought, but she was not now!—The world had of late grown very beautiful to her!

CHAPTER LXI.

THE BUREAU.

On the Monday night Donal again went down into the hidden parts of the castle. Arctura had come to the schoolroom, but seemed ill able for her work, and he did not tell her what he was doing farther.

They were rather the ghosts of fears than fears themselves that had assailed him, and this time they hardly came near him as he wrought. With his new file he made better work than before, and soon finished cutting through the top of the staple. Trying it then with a poker as a lever, he broke the bottom part across; so there was nothing to hold the bolt, and with a creaking noise of rusty hinges the door slowly opened to his steady pull. Nothing appeared but a wall of plank! He gave it a push; it yielded: another door, close-fitting, and without any fastening, flew open, revealing a small closet or press, and on the opposite side of it a third door. This he could not at once open. It was secured, however, with a common lock, which cost him scarcely any trouble. It opened on a little room, of about nine feet by seven. He went in. It contained nothing but an old-fashioned secretary or bureau, and a seat like a low music-stool.

"It may have been a vestry for the priest!" thought Donal; "but it must have been used later than the chapel, for this desk is not older than the one at The Mains, which mistress Jean said was made for her grandmother!"

x

Then how did it get into the place? There was no other door! Above the bureau was a small window, or what seemed a window doubtful with dirt; but door there was not! It was not too large to enter by the oak door, but it could not have got to it along any of the passages he had come through! It followed that there must, and that not so *very* long ago, have been another entrance to the place in which he stood!

He turned to look at the way he had himself come: it was through a common press of painted deal, filling the end of the little room, there narrowed to about five feet. When the door in the back of it was shut, it looked merely a part of the back of the press.

He turned again to the bureau, with a strange feeling at his heart. The cover was down, and on it lay some sheets of paper, discoloured with dust and age. A pen lay with them, and beside was an ink-bottle of the commonest type, the ink in powder and flakes. He took up one of the sheets. It had a great stain on it. The bottle must have been overturned! But was it ink? No; it stood too thick on the paper. With a gruesome shiver Donal wetted his finger and tried the surface of it: a little came off, a tinge of suspicious brown. There was writing on the paper! What was it? He held the faded lines close to the candle. They were not difficult to decipher. He sat down on the stool, and read thus—his reading broken by the stain: there was no date:—

"My husband for such I will—*blot*—are in the sight of God—*blot*—men why are you so cruel what—*blot*—deserve these terrors—*blot*—in thought have I—*blot*—hard upon me to think of another."

Here the writing came below the blot, and went on unbroken.

"My little one is gone and I am left lonely oh so lonely. I cannot but think that if you had loved me as you once did I should yet be clasping my little one to my bosom and you would have a daughter to comfort you after I am gone. I feel sure I cannot long survive this—ah there my hand has burst out bleeding again, but do not think I mind it, I know it was only an accident, you never meant to do it, though you teased me by refusing to say so—besides it is nothing. You might draw every drop of blood from my body and I would not care if only you would not make my heart bleed so. Oh, it is gone all over my paper and you will think I have done it to let you see how it bleeds—but I cannot write it all over again it is too great a labour and too painful to write, so you must see it just as it is. I dare not think where my baby is, for if I should be doomed never to see her because of

the love I have borne to you and consented to be as you wished if I am cast out from God because I loved you more than him I shall never see you again—for to be where I could see you would never be punishment enough for my sins."

Here the writing stopped: the bleeding of the hand had probably brought it to a close. The letter had never been folded, but lying there, had lain there. He looked if he could find a date; there was none. He held the sheet up to the light, and saw a paper mark; while close by lay another sheet with merely a date—in the same hand, as if the writer had been about to commence another in lieu of the letter spoiled.

"Strange!" thought Donal with himself; "an old withered grief looks almost as pitiful as an old withered joy!—But who is to say either is withered? Those who look upon death as an evil, yet regard it as the healer of sorrows! Is it such? No one can tell how long a grief may last unwithered! Surely till the life heals it! He is a coward who would be cured of his sorrow by mere lapse of time, by the mere forgetting of a brain that grows musty with age. It is God alone who can heal—the God of the dead and of the living! and the dead must find him, or be miserable for evermore!"

He had not a doubt that the letter he had read was in the writing of the mother of the present earl's children.

What was he to do? He had thought he was looking into matters much older—things over which the permission of lady Arctura extended; and in truth what he had discovered, or seen corroborated, was a thing she had a right to know! but whether he ought to tell her at once he did not yet see. He took up his candle, and with a feeling of helpless dismay, withdrew to his chamber. But when he reached the door of it, yielding to a sudden impulse, he turned away, and went farther up the stair, and out upon the bartizan.

It was a frosty night, and the stars were brilliant. He looked up and said,

"Oh Saviour of men, thy house is vaulted with light; thy secret places are secret from excess of light; in thee is no darkness at all; thou hast no terrible crypts and built-up places; thy light is the terror of those who love the darkness! Fill my heart with thy light; let me never hunger or thirst after anything but thy will—that I may walk in the light, and light not darkness may go forth from me."

As he turned to go in, came a faint chord from the aeolian harp.

"It sings, brooding over the very nest of evil deeds!" he

thought. "The light eternal, with keen arrows of radiant victory, will yet at last rout from the souls of his creatures the demons that haunt them!

"But if there be creatures of God that have turned to demons, may not human souls themselves turn to demons? Would they then be victorious over God, too strong for him to overcome—beyond the reach of repentance?

"How would they live? By their own power? Then were they Gods!—But they did not make themselves, and could not live of themselves. If not, then they must live by God's power. How then should they be beyond his reach?

"If the demons can never be brought back, then the life of God, the all-pure, goes out to keep alive, in and for evil, that which is essentially bad; for that which is irredeemable is essentially bad."

Thus reasoned Donal with himself, and his reasoning, instead of troubling his faith, caused him to cling the more to the only One, the sole hope and saviour of the hearts of his men and women, without whom the whole universe were but a charnel house in which the ghosts of the dead went about crying, not over the life that was gone from them, but its sorrows.

He stood and gazed out over the cold sea. And as he gazed, a shivering surge of doubt, a chill wave of negation, came rolling over him. He knew that in a moment he would strike out with the energy of a strong swimmer, and rise to the top of it; but now it was tumbling him about at its evil will. He stood and gazed—with a dull sense that he was waiting for his will. Suddenly came the consciousness that he and his will were one, that he had not to wait for his will, but had to wake—to will, that is, and do, and so be. And therewith he said to himself:—

"It is neither time, nor eternity, nor human consolation, nor everlasting sleep, nor the satisfied judgment, nor attained ambition, even in love itself, that is the cure for things; it is the heart, the will, the being of the Father. While that remains, the irremediable, the irredeemable cannot be. If there arose a grief in the heart of one of his creatures not otherwise to be destroyed, he would take it into himself, there consume it in his own creative fire—himself bearing the grief, carrying the sorrow. Christ died—and would die again rather than leave one heart-ache in the realms of his love—that is, of his creation. 'Blessed are they who have not seen and yet have believed!'"

Over his head the sky was full of shining worlds—mansions in the Father's house, built or building.

"We are not at the end of things," he thought, "but in the

beginnings and on the threshold of creation! The Father is as young as when first the stars of the morning sang—the Ancient of Days who can never grow old! He who has ever filled the dull unbelieving nations with food and gladness, has a splendour of delight for the souls that believe, ever as by their obedience they become capable of receiving it."

CHAPTER LXII.

THE CRYPT.

"WHEN are you going down again to the chapel, Mr. Grant?" said lady Arctura: she was better now, and able to work.

"I was down last night, and want to go again this evening by myself—if you don't mind, my lady," he answered. "I am sure it will be better for you not to go down till you are ready to give your orders to have everything cleared away for the light and air to enter. The damp and closeness of the place are too much for you."

"I think it was rather the want of sleep that made me ill," she answered; "but you can do just as you please."

"I thank you for your confidence, my lady," returned Donal. "I do not think you will repent it."

"I know I shall not."

Having some things to do first, it was late before Donal went down—intent on learning the former main entrance, and verifying the position of the chapel in the castle.

He betook himself to the end of the passage under the little gallery, and there examined the signs he had observed: those must be the outer ends of two of the steps of the great staircase! they came through, resting on the wall. That end of the chapel, then, adjoined the main stair. Evidently, too, a door had been built up in the process of constructing the stair. The chapel then had not been entered from that level since the building of the stair. Originally there had, most likely, been an outside stair to this door, in an open court.

After a little more examination, partial of necessity, from lack of light, he was on his way out, and already near the top of the mural stair, thinking of the fresh observations he would take outside in the morning, when behind, overtaking him from the regions he had left, came a blast of air, and blew out his candle.

He shivered—not with the cold of it, though it did breathe of underground damps and doubtful growths, but from a feeling of its having been sent after him to make him go down again—for did it not indicate some opening to the outer air? He relighted his candle and descended, carefully guarding it with one hand. The cold sigh seemed to linger about him as he went—gruesome as from a closed depth, the secret bosom of the castle, into which the light never entered. But, wherever it came from last, however earthy and fearful, it came first from the open regions of life, and had but passed through a gloom that life itself must pass! Could it have been a draught down the pipe of the music-chords? No, for they would have loosed some light-winged messenger with it! He must search till he found its entrance below!

He crossed the little gallery, descended, and went again into the chapel: it lay as still as the tomb which it was no more. He seemed to miss the presence of the dead, and feel the place deserted. All round its walls, as far as he could reach or see, he searched carefully, but could perceive no sign of possible entrance for the messenger blast. It came again!—plainly through the open door under the windows. He went again into the passage outside the wall, and the moment he turned into it, the draught seemed to come from beneath, blowing upwards. He stooped to examine; his candle was again extinguished. Once more he relighted it. Searching then along the floor and the foot of the walls, he presently found, in the wall of the chapel itself, close to the ground, a narrow horizontal opening: it must pass under the floor of the chapel! All he saw was a mere slit, but the opening might be larger, and partially covered by the flooring-slab, which went all the length of the slit! He would try to raise it! That would want a crowbar! but having got so far, he would not rest till he knew more! It must be very late and the domestics all in bed; but what hour it was he could not tell, for he had left his watch in his room. It might be midnight and he burrowing like a mole about the roots of the old house, or like an evil thing in the heart of a man! No matter! he would follow up his search—after what, he did not know.

He crept up, and out of the castle by his own stair, so to the tool-house. It was locked. But lying near was a half-worn shovel: that might do! he would have a try with it! Like one in a dream of ancient ruins, creeping through mouldy and low-browed places, he went down once more into the entrails of the house.

Inserting the sharp edge of the worn shovel in the gap between the stone and that next it, he raised it more readily than he had

hoped, and saw below it a small window, whose sill sloped steeply inward. How deep the place might be, and whether it would be possible to get out of it again, he must discover before entering. He took a letter from his pocket, lighted it, and threw it in. It revealed a descent of about seven feet, into what looked like a cellar. He blew his candle out, put it in his pocket, got into the window, slid down the slope, and reached his new level with ease. He then lighted his candle, and looked about him.

His eye first fell on a large flat stone in the floor, like a gravestone, but without any ornament or inscription. It was a roughly vaulted place, unpaved, its floor of damp hard-beaten earth. In the wall to the right of that through which he had entered, was another opening, low down, like the crown of an arch the rest of which was beneath the floor. As near as he could judge, it was right under the built-up door in the passage above. He crept through it, and found himself under the spiral of the great stair, in the small space at the bottom of its well. On the floor lay a dust-pan and a house-maid's-brush—and there was the tiny door at which they were shoved in, after their morning's use upon the stair! It was open—inwards; he crept through it: he was in the great hall of the house—and there was one of its windows wide open! Afraid of being by any chance discovered, he put out his light, and proceeded up the stair in the dark.

He had gone but a few steps when he heard the sound of descending feet. He stopped and listened: they turned into the half-way room. When he reached it, he heard sounds which showed that the earl was in the closet behind it. Things rushed together in his mind. He hurried up to lady Arctura's room, thence descended, for the third time that night—but no farther than the oak door, passed through it, entered the little chamber, and hastening to the farther end of it, laid his ear against the wall. Plainly enough he heard the sounds he had expected—those of the dream-walking rather than sleep-walking earl, moaning, and calling in a low voice of entreaty after some one whose name did not grow audible to the listener.

"Ah!" thought Donal, "who would find it hard to believe in roaming and haunting ghosts, that had once seen this poor man roaming his own house, and haunting that chamber! How easily I could punish him now, with a lightning blast of terror!"

It was but a thought; it did not amount to a temptation; Donal knew he had no right. Vengeance belongs to the Lord, for he alone knows how to use it.

I do not believe that *mere* punishment exists anywhere in the

economy of the highest; I think *mere* punishment a human idea, not a divine one. But the consuming fire is more terrible than any punishment invented by riotous and cruel imagination. Punishment indeed it is—not *mere* punishment; a power of God for his creature. Love is God's being; love is his creative energy; they are one: God's punishments are for the casting out of the sin that uncreates, for the recreating of the things his love made and sin has unmade.

He heard the lean hands of the earl go slowly sweeping, at the ends of his long arms, over the wall: he had seen the thing, else he could hardly have interpreted the sounds; and he heard him muttering on and on, though much too low for his words to be distinguishable. Had they been, Donal by this time was so convinced that he had to do with an evil and dangerous man, that he would have had little scruple in listening. It is only righteousness that has a right to secrecy, and does not want it; evil has no right to secrecy, alone intensely desires it, and rages at being foiled of it; for when its deeds come to the light, even evil has righteousness enough left to be ashamed of them. But he could remain no longer; his very soul felt sick within him. He turned hastily away to leave the place. But carrying his light too much in front, and forgetting the stool, he came against it and knocked it over, not without noise. A loud cry from the other side of the wall revealed the dismay he had caused. It was followed by a stillness, and then a moaning.

He made haste to find Simmons, and send him to his master. He heard nothing afterwards of the affair.

CHAPTER LXIII.

THE CLOSET.

TENDER over lady Arctura, Donal would ask a question or two of the housekeeper before disclosing what further he had found. He sought her room, therefore, while Arctura and Davie, much together now, were reading in the library.

"Did you ever hear anything about that little room on the stair, mistress Brookes?" he asked.

"I canna say," she answered—but thoughtfully, "—Bide a wee: auld auntie did mention something ance aboot—bide a wee—I hae a wullin' memory—maybe I'll min' upo' 't i' the noo!—

It was something aboot biggin' up an' takin' doon—something he was to do, an' something he never did!—I'm sure I canna tell! But gie me time, an' I'll min' upo' 't! Ance is aye wi' me—only I maun hae time!"

Donal waited, and said not a word.

"I min' this much," she said at length, "—that they used to be thegither i' that room. I min' too that there was something aboot buildin' up ae wa', an' pu'in' doon anither.—It's comin'—it's comin' back to me!"

She paused again awhile, and then said:

"All I can recollec', Mr. Grant, is this: that efter her death, he biggit up something no far frae that room!—what was't noo?—an' there was something aboot makin' o' the room bigger! Hoo that could be by buildin' up, I canna think! Yet I feel sure that was what he did!"

"Would you mind coming to the place?" said Donal. "To see it might help you to remember."

"I wull, sir. Come ye here aboot half efter ten, an' we s' gang thegither."

As soon as the house was quiet, they went. But Mistress Brookes could recall nothing, and Donal gazed about him to no purpose.

"What's that?" he said at last, pointing to the wall on the other side of which was the little chamber.

Two arches, in chalk, as it seemed, had attracted his gaze. Light surely was about to draw nigh through the darkness! Chaos surely was settling a little towards order!

The one arch was drawn opposite the hidden chamber; the other against the earl's closet, as it had come to be called in the house—most of the domestics thinking he there said his prayers. It looked as if there had been an intention of piercing the wall with such arches, to throw the two small rooms on the other side as recesses into the larger. But if that had been the intent, what could the building of a wall, vaguely recollected by mistress Brookes, have been for? That a wall had been built he did not doubt, for he believed he knew the wall, but why?

"What's that?" said Donal.

"What?" returned Mrs. Brookes.

"Those two arches."

The housekeeper looked at them thoughtfully for a few moments.

"I canna help fancyin'," she said slowly, "—yes, I'm sure that's the varra thing my aunt told me aboot! That's the twa places wi' tur he was goin' to tak the wall doon, to mak the

room lairger. But I'm sure she said something aboot buildin' a wall as weel!"

"Look here," said Donal; "I will measure the distance from the door to the other side of this first arch.—Now come into the closet behind. Look here! This same measurement takes us right up to the end of the place! So you see if we were to open the other arch, it would be into something behind this wall."

"Then this may be the varra wa' he biggit?"

"I don't doubt it; but what could he have had it built for, if he was going to open the other wall? I must think it all over!—It was after his wife's death, you say?"

"Yes, I believe so."

"One might have thought he would not care about enlarging the room after she was gone!"

"But, sir, he wasna jist sic a pattren o' a guidman;" said the housekeeper. "An' what for mak this room less?"

"May it not have been for the sake of shutting out, or hiding something?" suggested Donal.

"I do remember a certain thing!—Curious!—But what then as to the openin' o' 't efter?"

"He has never done it!" said Donal significantly. "The thing takes shape to me in this way:—that he wanted to build something out of sight—to annihilate it; but in order to prevent speculation, he professed the intention of casting the one room into the other; then built the wall across, on the pretence that it was necessary for support when the other was broken through—or perhaps that two recesses with arches would look better; but when he had got the wall built, he put off opening the arches on one pretext or another, till the thing should be forgotten altogether—as you see it is already, almost entirely!—I have been at the back of that wall, and heard the earl moaning and crying on this side of it!"

"God bless me!" cried the good woman. "I'm no easy scaret, but that's fearfu' to think o'!"

"You would not care to come there with me?"

"No the nicht, sir. Come to my room again, an' I s' mak ye a cup o' coffee, an' tell ye the story—it's a' come back to me noo—the thing 'at made my aunt tell me aboot the buildin' o' this wa'. 'Deed, sir, I hae hardly a doobt the thing was jist as ye say!"

They went to her room: there was lady Arctura sitting by the fire!

"My lady!" cried the housekeeper. "I thoucht I left ye soon' asleep!"

"So I was, I daresay," answered Arctura; "but I woke again,

and finding you had not come up, I thought I would go down to you. I was certain you and Mr. Grant would be somewhere together! Have you been discovering anything more?"

Mrs. Brookes gave Donal a look: he left her to tell as much or as little as she pleased.

"We hae been prowlin' aboot the hoose, but no doon yon'er, my lady. I think you an' me wad do weel to lea' that to Mr. Grant!"

"When your ladyship is quite ready to have everything set to rights," said Donal, "and to have a resurrection of the chapel, then I shall be glad to go with you again. But I would rather not even talk more about it just at present."

"As you please, Mr. Grant," replied lady Arctura. "We will say nothing more till I have made up my mind. I don't want to vex my uncle, and I find the question rather a difficult one—and the more difficult that he is worse than usual.—Will you not come to bed now, mistress Brookes?"

CHAPTER LXIV.

THE GARLAND-ROOM.

All through the terrible time, the sense of help and comfort and protection in the presence of the young tutor, went on growing in the mind of Arctura. It was nothing to her—what could it be?—that he was the son of a very humble pair; that he had been a shepherd, and a cow-herd, and a farm labourer—less than nothing. She never thought of the facts of his life except sympathetically, seeking to enter into the feelings of his memorial childhood and youth; she would never have known anything of those facts but for their lovely intimacies of all sorts with Nature—nature divine, human, animal, cosmical. By sharing with her his emotional history, Donal had made its facts precious to her; through them he had gathered his best—by home and by prayer, by mother and father, by sheep and mountains and wind and sky. And now he was to her a tower of strength, a refuge, a strong city, the shadow of a great rock in a weary land. She trusted him the more that he never invited her trust—never put himself before her; for always before her he set Life, the perfect heart-origin of her and his yet unperfected humanity, teaching her to hunger and thirst after being righteous like God, with the assurance of being filled.

She had once trusted in Miss Carmichael, not with her higher being, only with her judgment, and both her judgment and her friend had misled her. Donal had taught her that obedience, not to man but to God, was the only guide to holy liberty, and so had helped her to break the bonds of those traditions which, in the shape of authoritative utterances of this or that church, lay burdens grievous to be borne upon the souls of men. *For Christ, against all the churches*, seemed to her to express Donal's mission. An air of peace, an atmosphere of summer twilight after the going down of the sun, seemed to her to precede him and announce his approach with a radiation felt as rest. She questioned herself nowise about him. Falling in love was a thing unsuggested to her; if she was in what is called danger, it was of a better thing.

The next day she did not appear: mistress Brookes had persuaded her to keep her bed again for a day or two. There was nothing really the matter with her, she said herself, but she was so tired she did not care to lift her head from the pillow. She had slept well, and was troubled about nothing. She sent to beg Mr. Grant to let Davie go and read to her, and to give him something to read, good for him as well as for her.

Donal did not see Davie again till the next morning.

"Oh, Mr. Grant!" he said, "you never saw anything so pretty as Arkie is in bed! She is so white, and so sweet! and she speaks with a voice so gentle and low! She was so kind to me for going to read to her! I never saw anybody like her! She looks as if she had just said her prayers, and God had told her she should have everything she wanted."

Donal wondered a little, but hoped more. Surely she must be finding rest in the consciousness of God! But why was she so white? Was she going to die? A pang shot to his heart: if she were to go from the castle, it would be hard to stay in it, even for the sake of Davie! Donal, no more than Arctura, imagined himself fallen in love: he had loved once, and his heart had not yet done aching—though more with the memory than the presence of pain! He was utterly satisfied with what the Father of the children had decreed, and would never love again! But he did not seek to hide from himself that the friendship of lady Arctura, and the help she sought and he gave, had added a fresh and strong interest to his life. At the first dawn of power in his heart, when he began to make songs in the fields and on the hills, he had felt that to brighten with true light the clouded lives of despondent brothers and sisters was the one thing *worthest* living for: it was what the Lord came into the world for; neither had his trouble made him forget it—for more than one week or so:

while the pain was yet gnawing grievously, he woke to it again with self-accusation—almost self-contempt. To have helped this lovely creature, whose life had seemed lapt in an ever closer-clasping shroud of perplexity, was a thing to be glad of—not to the day of his death, but to the never-ending end of his life! was an honour conferred upon him by the Father, to last for evermore! For he had helped to open a human door for the Lord to enter! she within heard him knock, but, trying, was unable to open! To be God's helper with our fellows is the one high calling; the presence of God in the house the one high condition.

At the end of a week Arctura was better, and able to see Donal. She had had mistress Brookes's bed moved into the same room with her own, and had made the dressing-room into a sitting-room. It was sunny and pleasant—the very place, Donal thought, he would have chosen for her. The bedroom too, which the housekeeper had persuaded her to take when she left her own, was one of the largest in the castle—the Garland-room—old-fashioned, of course, but as cheerful as stateliness would permit, with gorgeous hangings and great pictures—far from homely, but with sun in it half the day. Donal congratulated her on the change. She had been prevented from making one sooner, she said, by the dread of owing any comfort to circumstance: it might deceive her as to her real condition!

"It could not deceive God, though," answered Donal, "who fills with righteousness those who hunger after it. It is pride to refuse anything that might help us to know him; and of all things his sun-lit world speaks of the father of lights! If that makes us happier, it makes us fitter to understand him, and he can easily send what cloud may be needful to temper it. We must not make our own world, inflict our own punishments, or order our own instruction; we must simply obey the voice in our hearts, and take lovingly what he sends."

The next day she told him she had had a beautiful night, full of the loveliest dreams. One of them was, that a child came out of a grassy hillock by the wayside, called her mamma, and said she was much obliged to her for taking her off the cold stone, and making her a butterfly; and with that the child spread out gorgeous and great wings and soared up to a white cloud, and there sat laughing merrily to her.

Every afternoon Davie read to her, and thence Donal gained a duty—that of finding suitable pabulum for the two. He was not widely read in light literature, and it made necessary not a little exploration in the region of it.

CHAPTER LXV.

THE WALL.

On the day after the last *triad* in the housekeeper's parlour, as Donal sat in the schoolroom with Davie—about noon it was—he became aware that for some time he had been hearing laborious blows apparently at a great distance: now that he attended, they seemed to be in the castle itself, deadened by mass, not distance. With a fear gradually becoming more definite, he sat listening for a few moments.

"Davie," he said, "run and see what is going on."

The boy came rushing back in great excitement.

"Oh, Mr. Grant, what do you think!" he cried. "I do believe my father is after the lost room! They are breaking down a wall!"

"Where?" asked Donal, half starting from his seat.

"In the little room behind the half-way room—on the stair, you know!"

Donal was silent: what might not be the consequences!

"You may go and see them at work, Davie," he said. "We shall have no more lessons this morning.—Was your papa with them?"

"No, sir—at least, I did not see him. Simmons told me he sent for the masons this morning, and set them to take the wall down. Oh, thank you, Mr. Grant! It is such fun! I do wonder what is behind it! It may be a place you know quite well, or a place you never saw before!"

Davie ran off, and Donal instantly sped to a corner where he had hidden some tools, thence to lady Arctura's deserted room, and so to the oak door. He remembered seeing another staple in the same post, a little lower down: if he could get that out, he would drive it in beside the remains of the other, so as to hold the bolt of the lock: if the earl knew the way in, as doubtless he did, he must not learn that another had found it—not yet at least! As he went down, every blow of the masons pounding at the wall, seemed in his very ears.

He peeped through the press-door: they had not yet got through the wall: no light was visible! He made haste to restore things—only a stool and a few papers—to their exact positions when first he entered. Close to him on the other side of the partition, shaking the place, the huge blows were falling like those

of a ram on the wall of a besieged city, of which he was the whole garrison. He stepped into the press and drew the door after him: with his last glance behind him he saw, in the faint gleam of light that came with it, a stone fall: he must make haste: the demolition would go on much faster now; but before they had the opening large enough to pass, he would have done what he wanted! With a strong piece of iron for a lever, he drew the staple from the post, then drove it in astride of the bolt, careful to time his blows to those of the masons. That done, he ran down to the chapel, gathered what dust he could sweep up from behind the altar and laid it on its top, restored on the bed, with its own dust, a little of the outline of what had lain there, dropped the slab to its place in the floor of the passage, closed the door of the chapel with some difficulty because of its broken hinge, and ascended.

The sounds of battering had ceased, and as he passed the oak door he laid his ear to it: some one was in the place! the lid of the bureau shut with a loud bang, and he heard a lock turned. The wall could not be half down yet: the earl must have entered the moment he could get through!

Donal hastened up, and out of the dreadful place, put the slab in the opening, secured it with a strut against the opposite side of the recess, and closed the shutters and drew the curtains of the room; if the earl came up the stair in the wall, found the stone immovable, and saw no light through any chink about its edges, he would not suspect it had been displaced!

He went then to lady Arctura.

"I have a great deal to tell you," he said, "but at this moment I cannot: I am afraid of the earl finding me with you!"

"Why should you mind that?" said Arctura.

"Because I think he is suspicious about the lost room. He has had a wall taken down this morning. Please do not let him see you know anything about it. Davie thinks he is set on finding the lost room: I think he knew all about it long ago. You can ask him what he has been doing: you must have heard the masons!"

"I hope I shall not stumble into anything like a story, for if I do I must out with everything!"

In the afternoon, Davie was full of the curious little place his father had discovered behind the wall; but, if that was the lost room, he said, it was not at all worth making such a fuss about: it was nothing but a big closet, with an old desk-kind of thing in it!

In the afternoon also, the earl went to see his niece. It was the first time they met after his rude behaviour on her proposal to search for the lost room.

"What were you doing this morning, uncle?" she said. "There was *such* a thumping and banging somewhere in the castle! Davie said you were *determined*, he thought, to find the lost room."

"Nothing of the kind, my love," answered the earl. "—I do hope they will not spoil the stair carrying the stones and mortar down!"

"What was it then, uncle?"

"Simply this, my dear: my late wife, your aunt, and I, had a plan for taking that closet behind my room on the stair into the room itself. In preparation, I had a wall built across the middle of the closet, so as to divide it and make two recesses of it, and act also as a buttress to the weakened wall. Then your aunt died, and I hadn't the heart to open the recesses or do anything more in the matter. So one half of the closet was cut off, and remained inaccessible. But there had been left in it an old bureau, containing papers of some consequence, for it was heavy, and intended to occupy the same position after the arches were opened. Now, as it happens, I want one of those papers, so the wall has had to come down again."

"But, uncle, what a pity!" said Arctura. "Why did you not open the arches? The recesses would have been so pretty in that room!"

"I am sorry I did not think of asking you what you would like done about it, my child! The fact is I never thought of your taking any interest in the matter; I had naturally lost all mine. You will please to observe, however, I have only restored what I had myself disarranged—not meddled with anything belonging to the castle!"

"But now you have the masons here, why not go on, and make a little search for the lost room?" said Arctura, venturing once more.

"We might pull down the castle and be none the wiser! Bah! the building up of half the closet may have given rise to the whole story!"

"Surely, uncle, the legend is older than that!"

"It may be; you cannot be sure. Once a going, it would immediately cry back to a remote age. Prove that any one ever spoke of it before the building of that foolish wall."

"Surely some remember hearing it long before that!"

"Nothing is more treacherous than a memory confronted with a general belief," said the earl, and took his leave.

The next morning Arctura went to see the alteration. She opened the door of the little room: it was twice its former size,

and two bureaus were standing against the wall! She peeped into the cupboard at the end of it, but saw nothing there.

That same morning she made up her mind that she would go no farther at present in regard to the chapel: it would be to break with her uncle!

In the evening, she acquainted Donal with her resolve, and he could not say she was wrong. There was no necessity for opposing her uncle—there might soon come one! He told her how he had entered the closet from behind, and of the noise he had made the night before, which had perhaps led to the opening of the place; but he did not tell her of what he had found on the bureau. The time might come when he must do so, but now he dared not render her relations with her uncle yet more uncomfortable; neither was it likely such a woman would consent to marry such a man as her cousin had shown himself; when that danger appeared, it would be time to interpose; for the mere succession to an empty title, he was not sure that he was bound to speak. The branch which could produce such scions, might well be itself a false graft on the true stem of the family!—if not, what was the family worth? He must at all events be sure it was his business before he moved in the matter!

CHAPTER LXVI.

PROGRESS AND CHANGE.

THINGS went on very quietly for a time. Arctura grew better, resumed her studies, and made excellent progress. She would have worked harder, but Donal would not let her. He hated forcing—even with the good will of the plant itself. He believed in a holy, unhasting growth. God's ways want God's time.

Long after, people would sometimes say to him—

"That is very well in the abstract; but in these days of hurry a young fellow would that way be left ages behind!"

"With God," would Donal say.

"Tut, tut! the thing would never work!"

"For your ends," Donal would answer, "it certainly would never work; but your ends are not those of the universe!"

"I do not pretend they are; but they are the success of the boy."

"That is one of the ends of the universe; and your reward will

be to thwart it for a season. I decline to make one in a conspiracy against the design of our creator: I would fain die loyal!"

He was of course laughed at, and not a little despised, as an extravagant enthusiast. But those who laughed found it hard to say for what he was enthusiastic. It seemed hardly for education, when he would even do what he could sometimes to keep a pupil back! He did not care to make the best of any one! The truth was, Donal's best was so many miles a-head of theirs, that it was below their horizon altogether. If there be any relation between time and the human mind, every forcing of human process, whether in spirit or intellect, is hurtful, a retarding of God's plan.

Lady Arctura's old troubles were gradually fading into the limbo of vanities. At times, however, mostly when unwell, they would come in upon her like a flood: what if, after all, God were the self-loving being theology presented—a being from whom no loving human heart could but recoil with a holy dislike! what if it was because of a nature specially evil that she could not accept the God in whom the priests and elders of her people believed! But again and again, in the midst of profoundest wretchedness from such doubt, had a sudden flush of the world's beauty—that beauty which Jesus has told us to consider and the modern pharisee to avoid, broken like gentlest mightiest sunrise through the hellish fog, and she had felt a power upon her as from the heart of a very God—a God such as she would give her life to believe in—one before whom she would cast herself in speechless adoration—not of his greatness—of that she felt little, but of his lovingkindness, the gentleness that was making her great. Then would she care utterly for God and his Christ, nothing for what men said about them: the Lord never meant his lambs to be under the tyranny of any, least of all the tyranny of his own most imperfect church! its work is to teach; where it cannot teach, it must not rule! Then would God appear to her not only true, but real—the heart of the human, to which she could cling, and so rest. The corruption of all religion comes of leaving the human, and God as the causing Human, for something imagined holier. Men who do not see the loveliness of the Truth, search till they find a lie they can call lovely. What but a human reality could the heart of man ever love! what else are we offered in Jesus but the absolutely human? That Jesus has two natures is of the most mischievous fictions of theology. The divine and the human are not two.

Suddenly, after an absence of months, reappeared lord Forgue —cheerful, manly, on the best terms with his father, and plainly willing to be on still better terms with his cousin! He had left

the place a mooning youth; he came back a man of the world—easy in carriage, courteous in manners, serene in temper, abounding in what seemed the results of observation, attentive but not too attentive, jolly with Davie, distant with Donal, polite to all. Donal could hardly receive the evidence of his senses: he would have wondered more had he known every factor in the change. All about him seemed to say it should not be his fault if the follies of his youth remained unforgotten; and his airy carriage sat well upon him. None the less Donal felt there was no restoration of the charm which had at first attracted him; that was utterly vanished. He felt certain he had been going down hill, and was now, instead of negatively, consciously and positively untrue.

With gradations undefined, but not unmarked of Donal, as if the man found himself under influences of which the youth had been unaware, he began to show himself not indifferent to the attractions of his cousin. He expressed concern that her health was not what it had been; sought her in her room when she did not appear; professed an interest in knowing what books she was reading, and what were her studies with Donal; behaved like a good brother-cousin, who would not be sorry to be something more.

And now the earl, to the astonishment of the household, began to appear at table; and, apparently as a consequence of this, Donal was requested rather than invited to take his meals with the family—not altogether to his satisfaction, seeing he could not only read while he ate alone, but could get through more quickly, and have the time thus saved, for things of greater consequence. His presence made it easier for lord Forgue to act his part, and the manners he brought to the front left little to be desired. He bowed to the judgment of Arctura, and seemed to welcome that of his father, to whom he was now as respectful as moralist could desire. Yet he sometimes faced a card he did not mean to show: who that is not absolutely true can escape the mishap!—there was condescension in his politeness to Donal! and this, had there been nothing else, would have been enough to revolt Arctura. But in truth he impressed her altogether as a man of outsides; she felt that she did not see the man he was, but the nearest approach he could make to the man he would be taken for. He was gracious, dignified, responsive, kind, amusing, accurate, ready—everything but true. He would make of his outer man all but what it was meant for—a revelation of the inner. It was that notwithstanding. He was a man dressed in a man, and his dress was a revelation of much that he was, while he intended it only to

show much that he was not. No man can help unveiling himself, however long he may escape even his own detection. There is nothing covered that shall not be revealed. Things were meant to come out, and be read, and understood, in the face of the universe. The soul of every man is as a secret book, whose content is yet written on its cover for the reading of the wise. How differently is it read by the fool, whose very understanding is a misunderstanding! He takes a man for a God when on the point of being eaten up of worms! he buys for thirty pieces of silver him whom the sepulchre cannot hold! Well for those in the world of revelation, who give their sins no quarter in this!

Forgue had been in Edinburgh a part of the time, in England another part. He had many things to tell of the people he had seen, and the sports he had shared in. He had developed and enlarged a vein of gentlemanly satire, which he kept supplied by the observation and analysis of the peculiarities, generally weaknesses, of others. These, as a matter of course, he judged merely by the poor standard of society: questioned concerning any upon the larger human scale, he could give no account of them. To Donal's eyes, the man was a shallow pool whose surface brightness concealed the muddy bottom.

CHAPTER LXVII.

THE BREAKFAST-ROOM.

Two years before, lady Arctura had been in the habit of riding a good deal, but after an accident to a favourite horse for which she blamed herself, she had scarcely ridden at all. It was quite as much, however, from the influence of Miss Carmichael upon her spirits, that she had forsaken the exercise. Partly because her uncle was neither much respected nor much liked, she had visited very little; and after mental trouble assailed her, growing under the false prescriptions of the soul-doctor she had called in, she withdrew more and more, avoiding even company she would have enjoyed, and which would before now have led her to resume it.

For a time she persisted in refusing to ride with Forgue. In vain he offered his horse, assuring her that Davie's pony was quite able to carry him; she had no inclination to ride, she said. But at last one day, lest she should be guilty of unkindness, she consented, and so enjoyed the ride—felt, indeed, so much the better

for it, that she did not thereafter so positively as before decline to allow her cousin to look out for a horse fit to carry her; and Forgue, taking her consent for granted, succeeded, with the help of the factor, in finding for her a beautiful creature, just of the sort to please her. Almost at sight of him she agreed to his purchase.

This put Forgue in great spirits, and much contentment with himself. He did not doubt that, gaining thus opportunity so excellent, he would quickly succeed in withdrawing her from the absurd influence which, to his dismay, he discovered his enemy had in his absence gained over her. He ought not to have been such a fool, he said to himself, as to leave the poor child to the temptations naturally arising in such a dreary solitude! He noted with satisfaction, however, that the parson's daughter seemed to have forsaken the house. And now at last, having got rid of the folly that a while possessed him, he was prepared to do his duty by the family, and, to that end, would make unfaltering use of the fascinations experience had taught him he was, in a most exceptional degree, gifted with! He would at once take Arctura's education in his own hands, and give his full energy to it! She should speedily learn the difference between the assistance of a gentleman and that of a clotpoll!

He had in England improved in his riding as well as his manners, and knew at least how a gentleman, if not how a man, ought to behave to the beast that carried him. Also, having ridden a good deal with ladies, he was now able to give Arctura not a few hints to the improvement of her seat, her hand, her courage; nor was there any nearer road, he judged from what he knew of his cousin, to her confidence and gratitude, than showing her a better way in a thing.

But thinking that in teaching her to ride he could make her forget the man who had been teaching her to live, he was not a little mistaken in the woman he desired to captivate.

He did not yet love her even in the way he called loving, else he might have been less confident; but he found her very pleasing. Invigorated by the bright frosty air, the life of the animal under her, and the exultation of rapid motion, she seemed better in health, more merry and full of life, than he had ever seen her: he put all down to his success with her. He was incapable of suspecting how little of it was owing to him; incapable of believing how much to the fact that she now turned to the father of spirits without fear, almost without doubt; thought of him as the root of every delight of the world—at the heart of the horse she rode, in the wind that blew joy into hers as she swept through its

yielding bosom; knew him as altogether loving and true, the father of Jesus Christ, as like him as like could be like—more like him than any one else in the universe could be like another—like him as only eternal son can be like eternal father.

It was no wonder that with such a well of living water in her heart she should be glad—merry even, and ready for anything her horse could do! Flying across a field in the very wildness of pleasure, her hair streaming behind her, and her pale face glowing, she would now and then take a jump Forgue declared he could not face in cold blood: he did not know how far from cold her blood was! He began to wonder he had been such a fool as neglect her for—well, never mind!—and to feel something that was like love, and was indeed admiration. But for the searing brand of his past, he might have loved her truly—as a man may, without being the most exalted of mortals; for in love we are beyond our ordinary selves; the deep thing in us peers up into the human air, and is of God—therefore cannot live long in the mephitic air of a selfish and low nature, but sinks again out of sight.

He was not at his ease with Arctura; he was afraid of her. When a man is conscious of wrong, knows in his history what would draw a hideous smudge over the portrait he would present to the eyes of her he would please, he may well be afraid of her. He makes liberal allowance for himself, but is not sure she will! And before Forgue lay a social gulf which he could pass only on the narrow plank of her favour! The more he was with her, the more he admired her, the more he desired to marry her; the more satisfied he grew with his own improvement, the more determined he became that for no poor, unjust scruples would he forgo his happiness. There was but one trifle to be kept from the world; it might know everything else about him! and once in possession of the property, who would dispute the title? Then again he was not *certain* that his father had not merely invented a threat! Surely if the fact were such, he would, even in rage diabolic, have kept it to himself!

Impetuous, and accustomed to what he counted success, he soon began to make plainer advance toward the end on which his self-love and cupidity at least were set. But, knowing in a vague manner how he had carried himself before he went, Arctura, uninfluenced by the ways of the world, her judgment unwarped, her perception undimmed, her instincts nice, her personal delicacy exacting, had never imagined he could approach her on any ground but that of cousinship and a childhood of shared sports. She had seen that Donal was far from pleased with him, and

believed Forgue knew that she knew he had been behaving badly. Her behaviour to him was indeed largely based on the fact that he was in disgrace: she was sorry for him.

By and by, however, she perceived that she had been allowing too much freedom where she was not prepared to allow more, and so one day declined to go with him. They had not had a ride for a fortnight, the weather having been unfavourable; and now when a morning broke into the season like a smile from an estranged friend, she would not go! He was annoyed—then alarmed, fearing adverse influence. They were alone in the breakfast-room.

"Why will you not, Arctura?" he asked reproachfully: "do you not feel well?"

"I am quite well," she answered.

"It is such a lovely day!" he pleaded.

"I am not in the mood. There are other things in the world besides riding, and I have been wasting my time—riding too much. I have learnt next to nothing since Larkie came."

"Oh, bother! what have you to do with learning! Health is the first thing."

"I don't think so—and learning is good for the health. Besides, I would not be a mere animal for perfect health!"

"Let me help you then with your studies."

"Thank you," she answered, laughing a little, "but I have a good master already! We, that is Davie and I, are reading Greek and mathematics with Mr. Grant."

Forgue's face flushed.

"I ought to know as much of both as he does!" he said.

"*Ought* perhaps! But you know you do not."

"I know enough to be your tutor."

"Yes, but I know enough not to be your pupil!"

"What do you mean?"

"That you can't teach."

"How do you know that?"

"Because you do not love either Greek or mathematics, and no one who does not love can teach."

"That is nonsense! If I don't love Greek enough to teach *it*, I love you enough to teach *you*," said Forgue.

"You are my riding-master," said Arctura; "Mr. Grant is my master in Greek."

Forgue strangled an imprecation on Mr. Grant, and tried to laugh, but there was not a laugh inside him.

"Then you won't ride to-day?" he said

"I think not," replied Arctura.

She ought to have said she would not. It is a pity to let doubt alight on decision. Her reply re-opened the whole question.

"I cannot see what should induce you to allow that fellow the honour of reading with you!" said Forgue. "He's a long-winded, pedantic, ill-bred lout!"

"Mr. Grant is my friend!" said Arctura, and raising her head looked him in the eyes.

"Take my word for it, you are mistaken in him," he said.

"I neither value nor ask your opinion of him," returned Arctura. "I merely acquaint you with the fact that he is my friend."

"Here's the devil and all to pay!" thought Forgue.

"I beg your pardon," he said: "you do not know him as I do!"

"Not?—and with so much better opportunity of judging!"

"He has never played the dominie with you!" said Forgue foolishly.

"Indeed he has!"

"He has! Confound his insolence! How?"

"He won't let me study as I want.—How has he interfered with you?"

"We won't quarrel about *him*," rejoined Forgue, attempting a tone of gaiety, but instantly growing serious. "We who ought to be so much to each other——"

Something told him he had already gone too far.

"I do not know what you mean—or rather, I am not willing to think I know what you mean," said Arctura. "After what took place——"

In her turn she ceased: he had said nothing!

"Jealous!" concluded Forgue; "—a good sign!"

"I see he has been talking against me!" he said.

"If you mean Mr. Grant, you mistake. He never, so far as I remember, once mentioned you to me."

"I know better!"

"You are rude. *He* never spoke of it; but I have seen enough with my own eyes——"

"If you mean that silly fancy—why, Arctura!—you know it was but a boyish folly!"

"And since then you have grown a man!—How many months has it taken?"

"I assure you, on the word of a gentleman, there is nothing in it now. It is all over, and I am heartily ashamed of it."

A pause of a few seconds followed: it seemed as many minutes, and unbearable.

"You *will* come out with me?" said Forgue: she might be relenting, though she did not look like it!

"No," she said; "I will not."

"Well," he returned, with simulated coolness, "this is rather cavalier treatment, I must say!—To throw a man over who has loved you so long—and for the sake of a lesson in Greek!"

"How long, pray, have you loved me?" said Arctura, growing angry. "I was willing to be friendly with you, so much so that I am sorry it is no longer possible!"

"You punish me pretty sharply, my lady, for a trifle of which I told you I was ashamed!" said Forgue, biting his lip. "It was the merest——"

"I do not wish to hear anything about it!" said Arctura sternly. Then, afraid she had been unkind, she added in altered tone: "You had better go and have a gallop. You may have Larkie if you like."

He turned and left the room. She only meant to pique him, he said to himself. She had been cherishing her displeasure, and now she had had her revenge would feel better and be sorry next! It was a very good morning's work after all! It was absurd to think she preferred a Greek lesson from a clown to a ride with lord Forgue! Was not she too a Graeme!

Partly to make reconciliation the easier, partly because the horse was superior to his own, he would ride Larkie!

But his reasoning was not so satisfactory to him as to put him in a good temper, and poor Larkie had to suffer for his ill-humour. His least movement that displeased him put him in a rage, and he rode him so foolishly as well as tyrannically that he brought him home quite lame, thus putting an end for a time to all hope of riding again with Arctura.

Instead of going and telling her what he had done, he sent for the farrier, and gave orders that the mishap should not be mentioned.

A week passed, and then another; and as he could say nothing about riding, he was in a measure self-banished from Arctura's company. A furious jealousy began to master him. He scorned to give place to it because of the insult to himself if he allowed a true ground for it. But it gradually gained power. This country bumpkin, this cow-herd, this man of spelling-books and grammars, to come between his cousin and him! Of course he was not so silly as imagine for a moment she cared for him!—that she would disgrace herself by falling in love with a fellow just loosed from the plough-tail! She was a Graeme, and could never be a traitor to her blood! If only he had not been such an infernal fool

A vulgar little thing without an idea in her head! So unpleasant—so disgusting at last with her love making! Nothing pleased her but hugging and kissing!—That was how he spoke to himself of the girl he had been *in love with!*

Damn that schoolmaster! She would never fall in love with him, but he might prevent her from falling in love with another! No attractions could make way against certain prepossessions! The girl had a fancy for being a saint, and the lout burned incense to her! So much he gathered from Davie. His father *must* get rid of the fellow! If he thought he was doing so well with Davie, why not send the two away together till things were settled?

But the earl thought it would be better to win Donal. He counselled him that every Grant was lord Seafield's cousin, and every highlander an implacable enemy where his pride was hurt. His lordship did not reflect that, if what he said were true of Donal, he must have left the castle long ago. There was but one thing would have made it impossible for Donal to remain—interference, namely, between him and his pupil.

Forgue did not argue with his father. He had given that up. At the same time, if he had told all that had passed between him and Donal, the earl would have confessed he had advised an impossibility.

Forgue took a step in a very different direction: he began to draw to himself the good graces of Miss Carmichael: he did not know how little she could serve him. Without being consciously insincere, she flattered him, and speedily gained his confidence. Well descended on the mother-side, she had grown up fit, her father said, to adorn any society: with a keen appreciation of the claims and dignities of the aristocracy, she was well able to flatter the prejudices she honoured and shared in. Careful not to say a word against his cousin, she made him feel more and more that his chief danger lay in the influence of Donal. She fanned thus his hatred of the man who first came between him and his wrath; next, between him and his "love;" and last, between him and his fortunes.

If only Davie would fall ill, and require change of air! But Davie was always in splendid health!

Now that he saw himself in such danger of failing, he fancied himself far more in love with Arctura than he was. And as he got familiarized with the idea of his illegitimacy, although he would not assent to it, he made less and less of it—which would have been a proof to any other than himself that he believed it. In further sign of the same, he made no inquiry into the matter—did not once even question his father about it. If it was true, he

did not want to know it: he would treat his lack of proof as ignorance, and act as with the innocence of ignorance! A fellow must take for granted what was commonly believed! At last, and the last was not long in arriving, he almost ceased to trouble himself about it.

His father laughed at his fear of failure with Arctura, but at times contemplated the thing as an awful possibility—not that he loved Forgue much. The only way fathers in sight of the grave can fancy themselves holding on to the things they must leave, is in their children; but lord Morven had a stronger and better reason for his unrighteousness: in a troubled, self-reproachful way, he loved the memory of their mother, and through her cared even for Forgue more than he knew. They were also his own as much as if he had been legally married to her! For the relation in which they stood to society, he cared little so long as it continued undiscovered. He enjoyed the idea of stealing a march on society, and seeing the sons he had left at such a disadvantage behind him, ruffling it, in spite of absurd law, with the foolish best. From the grave he would so have his foot on the neck of his enemy Law!—he was one of the many who can rejoice in even a stolen victory. Nor would he ever have been the fool to let the truth fly, except under the reaction of evil drugs, and the rush of fierce wrath at the threatened ruin of his cherished scheme.

Arctura thenceforth avoided her cousin as much as she could—only remembering that the house was hers, and she must not make him feel he was not welcome to use it. They met at meals, and she tried to behave as if nothing unpleasant had happened and things were as before he went away.

"You are very cruel, Arctura," he said one morning he met her in the terrace avenue.

"Cruel?" returned Arctura coldly; "I am not cruel. I would not willingly hurt anyone."

"You hurt me much; you give me not a morsel, not a crumb of your society!"

"Percy," said Arctura, "if you will be content to be my cousin, we shall get on well enough; but if you are set on what cannot be—once for all, believe me, it is of no use. You care for none of the things I live for! I feel as if we belonged to different worlds, so little have we in common. You may think me hard, but it is better we should understand each other. If you imagine that, because I have the property, you have a claim on me, be sure I will never acknowledge it. I would a thousand times rather you had the property and I were in my grave!"

"I will be anything, do anything, learn anything you please!" cried Forgue, his heart aching with disappointment.

"I know what such submission is worth!" said Arctura. "I should be everything till we were married, and then nothing! You dissemble, you hide even from yourself, but you are not hard to read."

Perhaps she would not have spoken just so severely, had she not been that morning unusually annoyed with his behaviour to Donal, and at the same time specially pleased with the calm, unconsciously dignified way in which Donal took it, casting it from him as the rock throws aside the sea-wave: it did not concern him! The dull world has got the wrong phrase: it is he who resents an affront who pockets it! he who takes no notice, lets it lie in the dirt.

CHAPTER LXVIII.

LARKIE.

It was a lovely day in spring.

"Please, Mr. Grant," said Davie, "may I have a holiday?"

Donal looked at him with a little wonder: the boy had never before made such a request! But he answered him at once.

"Yes, certainly, Davie. But I should like to know what you want it for."

"Arkie wants very much to have a ride to-day. She says Larkie—I gave him his name, to rime with *Arkie*—she says Larkie will forget her, and she does not wish to go out with Forgue, so she wants me to go with her on my pony."

You will take good care of her, Davie?"

"I *will* take care of her, but you need not be anxious about us, Mr. Grant. Arkie is a splendid rider, and much pluckier than she used to be!"

Donal did, however—he could not have said why—feel a little anxiety. He repressed it as unfaithfulness, but it kept returning. He could not go with them—there was no horse for him, and to go on foot, would, he feared, spoil their ride. He was so much afraid also of presuming on lady Arctura's regard for him, that he would have shrunk from offering had it been more feasible. He got a book, and strolled into the park, not even going to see them off: Forgue might be about the stable, and make things unpleasant!

Had Forgue been about the stable, he would, I think, have somehow managed to prevent the ride, for Larkie, though much better, was not yet cured of his lameness. Arctura did not know he had been lame, or that he had therefore been very little exercised, and was now rather wild, with a pastern-joint far from equal to his spirit. There was but a boy about the stable, who either did not understand, or was afraid to speak: she rode in a danger of which she knew nothing. The consequence was that, jumping the merest little ditch in a field outside the park, they had a fall. The horse got up and trotted limping to the stable; his mistress lay where she fell. Davie, wild with misery, galloped home. From the height of the park Donal saw him tearing along, and knew something was amiss. He ran, got over the wall, found the pony's track, and following it, came where Arctura lay.

There was a little clear water in the ditch: he wet his handkerchief, and bathed her face. She came to herself, opened her eyes with a faint smile, and tried to raise herself, but fell back helpless, and closed her eyes again.

"I believe I am hurt!" she murmurmed. "I think Larkie must have fallen!"

Donal would have carried her, but she moaned so, that he gave up the idea at once. Davie was gone for help; it would be better to wait! He pulled off his coat and laid it over her, then kneeling, raised her head a little from the damp ground upon his arm. She let him do as he pleased, but did not open her eyes.

They had not long to wait. Several came running, among them lord Forgue. He fell beside his cousin on his knees, and took her hand in his. She neither moved nor spoke. As instead of doing anything he merely persisted in claiming her attention, Donal saw it was for him to give orders.

"My lady is much hurt," he said: "one of you go at once for the doctor; the others bring a hand-barrow—I know there is one about the place. Lay the squab of a sofa on it, and make haste. Let mistress Brookes know."

"Mind your own business," said Forgue.

"Do as Mr. Grant tells you," said lady Arctura, without opening her eyes.

The men departed running. Forgue rose from his knees, and walked slowly to a little distance, where he stood gnawing his lip.

"My lord," said Donal, "please run and fetch a little brandy for her ladyship. She has fainted."

What could Forgue do but obey! He started at once, and with tolerable speed. Then Arctura opened her eyes, and smiled.

"Are you suffering much, my lady?" asked Donal.

"A good deal," she answered, "but I don't mind it.—Thank you for not leaving me.—It is no more than I can bear, only bad when I try to move."

"They will not be long now," he said.

Again she closed her eyes, and was silent. Donal watched the sweet face, which a cloud of suffering would every now and then cross, and lifted up his heart to the saviour of men.

He saw them coming with the extemporized litter, behind them mistress Brookes, with Forgue and one of the maids.

When she came up, she addressed herself in silence to Donal. He told her he feared her ladyship's spine was hurt. After his direction she put her hands under her and the maid took her feet, while he, placing his other arm under her shoulders, and gently rising, raised her body. Being all strong and gentle, they managed the moving well, and laid her slowly on the litter. Except a moan or two, and a gathering of the brows, she gave no sign of suffering; nothing to be called a cry escaped her.

Donal at the head and a groom at the foot, lifted the litter, and with ordered step, started for the house. Once or twice she opened her eyes and looked up at Donal, then, as if satisfied, closed them again. Before they reached the house the doctor met them, for they had to walk slowly.

Forgue came behind in a devilish humour. He knew that first his ill usage of Larkie, and then his preventing anything being said about it, must have been the cause of the accident; but he felt with some satisfaction—for self simply makes devils of us—that if she had not refused to go out with him, it would not have happened; he would not have allowed her to mount Larkie. "Served her right!" he caught himself saying once, and was ashamed—but presently said it again. Self is as full of worms as it can hold; God deliver us from it!

CHAPTER LXIX.

THE SICK-CHAMBER.

SHE was carried to her room and laid on her bed. The doctor requested Mrs. Brookes and Donal to remain, and dismissed the rest, then proceeded to examine her. There were no bones broken, he said, but she must be kept very quiet. The windows must be darkened, and she must if possible sleep. She gave Donal a faint smile, and a pitiful glance, but did not speak. As he was following the doctor from the room, she made a sign to Mrs. Brookes with her eyes that she wanted to speak to him.

He came, and bent over to hear, for she spoke very feebly.

"You will come and see me, Mr. Grant?"

"I will, indeed, my lady."

"Every day?"

"Yes, most certainly," he replied.

She smiled, and so dismissed him. He went with his heart full.

A little way from the door stood Forgue, waiting for him to come out. He had sent the doctor to his father. Donal passed him with a bend of the head. He followed him to the schoolroom.

"It is time this farce was over, Grant!" he said.

"Farce, my lord!" repeated Donal indignantly.

"These attentions to my lady."

"I have paid her no more attention than I would your lordship, had you required it," answered Donal sternly.

"That would have been convenient doubtless! But there has been enough of humbug, and now for an end to it! Ever since you came here, you have been at work on the mind of that inexperienced girl—with your damned religion!—for what end you know best! and now you've half killed her by persuading her to go out with you instead of me! The brute was lame and not fit to ride! Any fool might have seen that!"

"I had nothing to do with her going, my lord. She asked Davie to go with her, and he had a holiday on purpose."

"All very fine, but——"

"My lord, I have told you the truth, but not to justify myself: you must be aware your opinion is of no value in my eyes! But tell me one thing, my lord: if my lady's horse was lame, how was it she did not know? You did!"

Forgue thought Donal knew more than he did, and was taken aback.

"It is time the place was clear of you!" he said.

"I am your father's servant, not yours," answered Donal, "and do not trouble myself as to your pleasure concerning me. But I think it is only fair to warn you that, though you cannot hurt me, nothing but honesty can take you out of my power."

Forgue turned on his heel, went to his father, and told him he *knew* now that Donal was prejudicing the mind of lady Arctura against him; but not until it came in the course of the conversation, did he mention the accident she had had.

The earl professed himself greatly shocked, got up with something almost like alacrity from his sofa, and went down to inquire after his niece. He would have compelled Mrs. Brookes to admit him, but she was determined her lady should not be waked from a sleep invaluable to her, for the sake of receiving his condolements, and he had to return to his room without gaining anything.

If she were to go, the property would be his, and he could will it as he pleased—that was, if she left no will. He sent for his son and cautioned him over and over to do nothing to offend her, but wait: what might come, who could tell! It might prove a serious affair!

Forgue tried to feel shocked at the coolness of his father's speculation, but allowed that, if she was determined not to receive him as her husband, the next best thing, in the exigence of affairs, would certainly be that she should leave a world for whose uses she was ill fitted, and go where she would be happier. The things she would then have no farther need of, would be welcome to those to whom by right they belonged more really than to her! She was a pleasant thing to look upon, and if she had loved him he would rather have had the property with than without her; but there was this advantage, he would be left free to choose!

Lady Arctura lay suffering, feverish, and restless. Mrs. Brookes would let no one sit up with her but herself. The earl would have sent for "a suitable nurse!" a friend of his in London would find one! but she would not hear of it. And before the night was over she had greater reason still for refusing to yield her post: it was evident her young mistress was more occupied with Donal Grant than with the pain she was suffering! In her delirium she was constantly desiring his presence. "I know he can help me," she would say; "he is a shepherd, like the Lord himself!" And mistress Brookes, though by no means devoid of the prejudices of the rank with which her life had been so

much associated, could not but allow that a nobler life must be possible with one like Donal Grant than with one like lord Forgue.

In the middle of the night Arctura became so unquiet, that her nurse, calling the maid she had in a room near, flew like a bird to Donal, and asked him to come down. He had but partially undressed, thinking his help might be wanted, and was down almost as soon as she. Ere he came, however, she had dismissed the maid.

Donal went to the bedside. Arctura was moaning and starting, sometimes opening her eyes, but distinguishing nothing. Her hand lay on the counterpane: he laid his upon it. She gave a sigh as of one relieved; a smile came flickering over her face, and she lay still for some time. Donal sat down beside her, and watched. The moment he saw her begin to be restless or look distressed, he laid his hand upon hers; she was immediately quiet, and lay for a time as if she knew herself safe. When she seemed about to wake, he withdrew.

So things went on for many nights. Donal slept instead of working when his duties with Davie were over, and lay at night in the corridor, wrapt in his plaid. For even after Arctura began to recover, her nights were sorely troubled, and her restoration would have been much retarded, had not Donal been near to make her feel she was not abandoned to the terrors she passed through.

One night the earl, wandering about in the anomalous condition of neither ghost nor genuine mortal, came suddenly upon what he took for a huge animal in wait to devour. He was not terrified, for he was accustomed to such things, and thought at first it was not of this world: he had no doubt of the reality of his visions, even when he knew they were invisible to others, and even in his waking moments had begun to believe in them as much as in the things then evident to him—or rather, perhaps, to disbelieve equally in both. He approached to see what it was, and stood staring down upon the mass. Gently it rose and confronted him—if confronting that may be called where the face remained so undefined—for Donal took care to keep his plaid over his head: he had hope in the probable condition of the earl! He turned from him and walked away.

CHAPTER LXX.

A PLOT.

But his lordship had his suspicions, and took measures to confirm or set them at rest—with the result that he concluded Donal madly in love with his niece, and unable, while she was ill, to rest anywhere but, with the devotion of a savage, outside her door: if he did not take precautions, the lout would oust the lord! Ever since Donal spoke so plainly against his self-indulgence, he had not merely hated but feared the country lad. He recognized that Donal feared nothing, had no respect of persons, would speak out before the world. He was doubtful also whether he had not allowed him to know more than it was well he should know. It was time to get rid of him—only it must be done cautiously, with the appearance of a good understanding! If he had him out of the house before she was able to see him again, that would do! And if in the meantime she should die all would be well! His distrust, once roused, went farther than that of his son. He had not the same confidence in blue blood; he knew a few things more than Forgue—believed it quite possible that the daughter of a long descent of lords and ladies should fall in love with a shepherd-lad. And as no one could te l what might have to be done if th legal owner of the property persisted in refusing her hand to the rightful owner of it, the fellow might be seriously in the way!

Arctura slowly recovered. She had not yet left her room, but had been a few hours on the couch every day for a fortnight, and the doctor, now sanguine of her final recovery, began to talk of carrying her to the library. The earl, who never suspected that Mrs. Brookes, having hitherto kept himself from her room, would admit the tutor, the moment he learned that the library was in view for her, decided that there must be no more delay. He had by this time contrived a neat little plan.

He sent for Donal. He had been thinking, the earl said, that he must want a holiday: he had not seen his parents since he came to the castle! and he had been thinking besides, how desirable it was that Davie should see some other phases of life than those to which he had hitherto been accustomed. There was great danger of boys brought up in his position getting narrow, and careless of the lives and feelings of their fellowmen! He would take it as a great kindness if Donal, who had a regard

to the *real* education of his pupil, would take him to his home, and let him understand the ways of life among the humbler classes of the nation—so that, if ever he went into parliament, he might have the advantage of knowing the heart of the people for whom he would have to legislate.

Donal listened, and could not but agree with the remarks of his lordship. In himself he had not the least faith—wondered indeed which of them thought the other the greater fool to imagine that after all that had passed Donal would place any confidence in what the earl said; but he listened. What lord Morven really had in his mind, he could not surmise; but not the less to take Davie to his father and mother was a delightful idea. The boy was growing fast, and had revealed a faculty quite rare in one so young, for looking to the heart of things, and seeing the relation of man to man; therefore such a lesson as the earl proposed would indeed be invaluable to him! Then again, this faculty had been opened in him through a willing perception of those eternal truths, in a still higher relation of persons, which are open only to the childlike nature; whence he would be especially fitted for such company as that of his father and mother, who could now easily receive the boy as well as himself, since their house and their general worldly condition had been so much bettered by their friend, sir Gibbie! With them Davie would see genuine life, simplicity, dignity, and unselfishness—the very embodiment of the things he held constantly before him! There might be some other reason behind the earl's request which it would be well for him to know; but he would sooner discover that by a free consent than by hanging back: anything bad it could hardly be! He shrank indeed from leaving lady Arctura while she was yet so far from well, but she was getting well much faster now: for a fortnight there had been no necessity for his presence to soothe her while she slept. Neither did she yet know, so far, at least, as he or mistress Brookes was aware, that he had ever been near her in the night! It was well also because of the position of things between him and lord Forgue, that he should be away for a while: it would give a chance for that foolish soul to settle down, and let common sense assume the reins, while yet the better coachman was not allowed to mount the box! He had, of course, heard nothing of the strained relations between him and lady Arctura; he might otherwise have been a little more anxious. For the earl, Davie, he thought, would be a kind of pledge or hostage—in regard of what, he could not specify; but, though he little suspected what such a man was capable of sacrificing to gain a cherished end,

some security for him, some hold over him, seemed to Donal not undesirable.

When Davie heard the proposal, he was wild with joy. Actually to see the mountains, and the sheep, and the colleys, of which Donal had told him such wonderful things! To be out all night, perhaps, with Donal and the dogs and the stars and the winds! Perhaps a storm would come, and he would lie in Donal's plaid under some great rock, and hear the wind roaring around them, but not able to get at them! And the sheep would come and huddle close up to them, and keep them warm with their woolly sides! and he would stroke their heads and love them! Davie was no longer a mere child—far from it; but what is loveliest in the child's heart was only the stronger in him; and the prospect of going with Donal was a thing to be dreamed of day and night till it came! Nor were the days many before their departure was definitely settled.

The earl would have Mr. Grant treat his pupil precisely as one of his own standing: he might take him on foot if he pleased!

The suggestion was eagerly accepted by both. They got their boxes ready for the carrier, packed their wallets, and one lovely morning late in spring, just as summer was showing her womanly face through its smiles and tears, they set out together.

It was with no small dismay that Arctura heard of the proposal. She said nothing, however—only when Donal came to take his leave she broke down a little.

"We shall often wish, Davie and I, that you were with us, my lady," he said.

"Why?" she asked, unable to say more.

"Because we shall often feel happy, and what then can we do but wish you shared our happiness!"

She burst into tears, and presently was able to speak.

"Don't think me silly," she said. "I know God is with me, and as soon as you are gone I will go to him to comfort me. But I cannot help feeling as if you were leaving me like a lamb among wolves. I can give no reason for it; I only feel as if some danger were near me. But I have you yet, mistress Brookes: God and you will take care of me!—Indeed, if I hadn't you," she added, laughing through her tears, "I should run away with Mr. Grant and Davie!"

"If I had known you felt like that," said Donal, "I would not have gone. Yet I hardly see how I could have avoided it, being Davie's tutor, and bound to do as his father wishes with him. Only, dear lady Arctura, there is no chance in this or in anything!

We will not forget you, and in three weeks or a month we shall be back."

"That is a long time," said Arctura, ready to weep again.

Is it necessary to say she was not a weak woman? It is not betrayal of feeling, but avoidance of duty, that constitutes weakness. After an illness he has borne like a hero, a strong man may be ready to weep like a child. What the common people of society think about strength and weakness, is poor stuff, like the rest of their wisdom.

She speedily recovered her composure, and with the gentlest smile bade Donal good-bye. She was in her sitting-room next the state-chamber where she now slept; the sun was shining in at the open window, and with it came the song of a little bird, clear and sweet.

"You hear him," said Donal. "—how he trusts God without knowing it! *We* are made able to trust him knowing in whom we believe! Ah, dear lady Arctura! no heart even yet can tell what things God has in store for them who will just let him have his way with them. Good-bye. Write to me if anything comes to you that I can help you in. And be sure I will make haste to you the moment you let me know you want me."

"Thank you, Mr. Grant: I know you mean every word you say! If I need you, I will not hesitate to send for you—only if you come, it will be as my friend, and not——"

"It will be as *your* servant, not lord Morven's," said Donal. "I quite understand. Good bye. The father of Jesus Christ, who was so sure of him, will take care of you: do not be afraid."

He turned and went; he could no longer bear the look of her eyes.

CHAPTER LXXI.

GLASHGAR.

Out of Arctura's sight Donal had his turn of so-called weakness!

The day was a glorious one, and Davie, full of spirits, could not understand why he seemed so unlike himself.

"Arkie would scold you, Mr. Grant!" he said.

Donal avoided the town, and walked a long way round to get into the road beyond it, his head bent as if he were pondering a pain. At moments he felt as if he must return at once, and refuse

to leave the castle for any reason. But he could not see that it was the will of God he should do so. A presentiment is not a command. A prophecy may fail of the least indication of duty. Hamlet defying augury is the consistent religious man Shakspere takes pains to show him. A presentiment may be true, may be from God himself, yet involve no reason why a man should change his way, should turn a step aside from the path before him. St. Paul received warning after warning on his road to Jerusalem that bonds and imprisonment awaited him, and these warnings he knew came from the spirit of prophecy, but he heeded them only to set his face like a flint. He knew better than imagine duty determined by consequences, or take foresight for direction. There is a higher guide, and he followed that. So did Donal now. Moved to go back, he did not go back—neither afterwards repented that he did not.

I will not describe the journey. Suffice it to say that, after a few days of such walking as befitted an unaccustomed boy, they climbed the last hill, crossed the threshold of Robert Grant's cottage, and were both clasped in the embrace of Janet. For Davie rushed into the arms of Donal's mother, and she took him to the same heart to which she had taken wee sir Gibbie: the bosom of the peasant woman was indeed one to flee to.

Then followed delights which more than equalled the expectations of Davie. One of them was seeing how Donal was loved. Another was a new sense of freedom: he had never imagined such liberty as he now enjoyed. It was as if God were giving it to him fresh out of his sky, his mountains, his winds. Then there was the twilight on the hill-side, with the sheep growing dusky around him; when Donal would talk about the shepherd of the human sheep; and hearing him Davie felt not only that there was once, but that there is now a man altogether lovely—the heart of all beauty everywhere—a man who gave himself up to his perfect father and his father's most imperfect children, that he might bring his brothers and sisters home to their father; for all his delight is in his father and his father's children. He showed him how the heart of Jesus was, all through, the heart of a son, a son that adored his perfect father; and how if he had not had his perfect son to help him, God could not have made any of us, could never have got us to be his little sons and daughters, loving him with all our might. Then Davie's heart would glow, and he would feel ready to do whatever that son might want him to do; and Donal hoped, and had good ground for hoping, that, when the hour of trial came, the youth would be able to hold, not merely by the unseen, but by the seemingly unpresent and unfelt, in the name of the eternally true.

Donal's youth began to seem far behind him. All bitterness was gone out of his memories of lady Galbraith. He loved her tenderly, but was pleased she should be Gibbie's.

How much of this happy change was owing to his interest in lady Arctura he did not inquire: greatly interested in her—more in very important ways than he had ever been in lady Galbraith—he was so jealous of his heart, shrank so much from the danger of folly, knew so well how small an amount of yielding might unfit him for the manly and fresh performance of his duties—among which came first a due regard for her well-being lest he should himself fail or mislead her—that he often turned his thoughts into another channel, lest in that they should run too swiftly, deepen it too fast, and go far to imprison themselves in another agony.

To lady Galbraith he confided his uneasiness about lady Arctura—not that he could explain—he could only confess himself infected with her uneasiness, and the rather that he knew better than she the nature of those with whom she might have to cope. If Mrs. Brookes had not been there, he dared not have come away, he said, leaving her with such a dread upon her.

Sir Gibbie listened open-mouthed to the tale of the finding of the lost chapel, hidden away because it held the dust of the dead, and perhaps sometimes their wandering ghosts.

They assured him that, if he would bring lady Arctura to them, they would take care of her: had she not better give up the weary property, they said, and come and live with them, and be free as the lark? But Donal said, that, if God had given her a property, he would not have her forsake her post, but wait for him to relieve her. She must administer her own kingdom ere she could have an abundant entrance into his! Only he wished he were near her again to help her!

CHAPTER LXXII.

SENT, NOT CALLED.

He had been at home about ten days, during which not a word had come to Davie or himself from the castle, and was beginning to grow, not perhaps anxious, but hungry for news of lady Arctura, when from a sound sleep he started suddenly awake one midnight to find his mother by his bedside: she had roused him with difficulty.

"Laddie," she said, "I'm thinkin ye're wantit."

"Whaur am I wantit, mother?" he asked, rubbing his eyes, but with anxiety already throbbing at his heart.

"At the castle," she replied.

"Hoo ken ye that?" he asked.

"It wad be ill tellin' ye," she answered. "But gien I was you, Donal, I wad be aff afore the day brak, to see what they're duin' wi' yon puir leddy at the muckle place ye left. My hert 's that sair aboot her, I canna rest a moment till I hae ye awa' upo' the ro'd til her!"

Long before his mother had ended, Donal was out of bed, and hurrying on his clothes. He had the profoundest faith in whatever his mother said. Was it a vision she had had? He had never been told she had the second sight! It might have been only a dream, or an impression so deep she must heed it! One thing was plain: there was no time to ask questions! It was enough that his mother said "Go;" more than enough that it was for lady Arctura! How quickest could he go? There were horses at sir Gibbie's: he would make free with one! He put a crust of bread in his pocket, and set out running. There was a little moonlight, enough for one who knew every foot of the way; and in half an hour of swift descent, he was at the stable door of Glashruach.

Finding himself unable to rouse anyone, he crept through a way he knew, opened the door, without a moment's hesitation saddled and bridled sir Gibbie's favourite mare, led her out, and mounted her.

Safe in the saddle, with four legs busy under him, he had time to think, and began to turn over in his mind what he must do. But he soon saw there was no planning anything till he knew what was the matter—of which he had dreadful forebodings. His imagination started and spurred by fear, he thought of many dread

possibilities concerning which he wondered that he had never thought of them before: if he had he could not have left the castle! What might not a man in the mental and moral condition of the earl, unrestrained by law or conscience, risk to secure the property for his son? Might he not poison her, smother her, kill her somehow, anyhow that was safest? Then rushed into his mind what the housekeeper had told him of his cruelty to his wife: a man 'ike that, no longer *feeling*, however *knowing* the difference between right and wrong, hardly knowing the difference between dreaming a thing and doing the thing, was no fitter member of a family than any devil in or out of hell! He would have blamed himself bitterly had he not been sure he was not following his own will in going away. If there were a better way it had not been intended he should take it, else it would have been shown him! But now he would be restrained by no delicacy towards the earl: whatever his hand found to do he would do, regardless of appearances! If he could not reach lady Arctura, he would seek the help of the law, tell what he knew, and get a warrant of search. He dared not think what he dreaded, but he would trust nothing but seeing her with his own eyes, and hearing from her own mouth that all was well—which could not be, else why should his mother have sent him to her? Doubtless the way would unfold before him as he went on; but if everything should seem to go against him, he would yet say with sir Philip Sidney that, "since a man is bound no farther to himself than to do wisely, chance is only to trouble them that stand upon chance." If his plans or attempts should one after the other fail, "there's a divinity that shapes our ends, rough-hew them how we will"! So he rode on, careful over his mare, lest much haste should be little speed. The animal was strong and in good condition, and by the time Donal had seen the sun rise, ascend the heavens, and go half-way down their western slope, and had stopped three times to refresh the mare, he found himself, after much climbing and descent, on a good level road that promised by nightfall to bring him to the place of his desire.

But the mare was now getting tired, and no wonder, for she had had more than a hard day's work. Donal dismounted every now and then to relieve her, that he might go the faster when he mounted again, comforting himself that in the true path the delays are as important as the speed; for the hour is the point, not the swiftness: an hour too soon may even be more disastrous than an hour too late! He would arrive at the right time for him whose ways are not as our ways inasmuch as they are greatly better! The sun went down and the stars came out, and the

long twilight began. But before he was a mile farther he became aware that the sky had clouded over, the stars had vanished, and rain was at hand. The day had been sultry, and relief was come. Lightning flamed out, and darkness full of thunder followed. The storm was drawing nearer, but his mare, though young and high-spirited, was too weary to be frightened; the rain refreshed both, and they made a little more speed. But it was dark night, with now grumbling now raging storm, before they came where, had it been light, Donal would have looked to see the castle.

CHAPTER LXXIII.

IN THE NIGHT.

When he reached the town, he rode into the yard of the Morven Arms, and having found a sleepy ostler, gave up his mare: he would be better without her at the castle!—whither he was setting out to walk when the landlord appeared.

"We didna luik to see you, sir, at this time!" he said.

"Why not?" returned Donal.

"We thoucht ye was awa' for the simmer, seein' ye tuik the yoong gentleman wi' ye, an' the yerl himsel' followt!"

"Where is he gone?" asked Donal.

"Oh! dinna ye ken, sir? hae na ye h'ard?"

"Not a word."

"That's verra strange, sir!—There's a clean clearance at the castel. First gaed my lord Forgue, an' syne my lord himsel' an' my lady, an' syne gaed the hoosekeeper—her mither was deein', they said. I'm thinkin' there maun be a weddin' to the fore. There was some word o' fittin' up the auld hoose i' the toon, 'cause lord Forgue didna care aboot bein' at the castel ony langer. It's strange ye haena h'ard, sir!"

Donal stood absorbed in awful hearing. Surely some letter must have miscarried! The sure and firm-set earth seemed giving way under his feet.

"I will run up to the castle, and hear all about it," he said. "Look after my mare, will you?"

"But I'm tellin' ye, sir, ye'll fin' naebody there!" said the man. "They're a' gane frae the hoose ony gait. There's no a sowl aboot that but deif Betty Lobban, wha wadna hear the angel wi' the last trump. Mair by token, she's that feart for

robbers she gangs til her bed the minute it begins to grow dark, an' sticks her heid 'aneth the bed-claes—no 'at that maks her ony deifer!"

"Then you think there is no use in going up?"

"Not the smallest," answered the inn-keeper.

"Get me some supper then. I will take a look at my mare."

He went and saw that she was attended to—then set off for the castle as fast as his legs would carry him. There was foul play beyond a doubt!—of what sort he could not tell! If the man's report was correct, he would go straight to the police! Then first he remembered, in addition to the other reported absences, that before he left with Davie, the factor and his sister had gone together for a holiday: had this been contrived?

He mounted the hill and drew near the castle. A terrible gloom fell upon him: there was not a light in the sullen pile! It was darksome even to terror! He went to the main entrance, and rang the great bell as loud as he could ring it, but there was no answer to the summons, which echoed and yelled horribly, as if the house were actually empty. He rang again, and again came the horrible yelling echo, but no more answer than if it had been a mausoleum. He had been told what to expect, yet his heart sank within him. Once more he rang and waited; but there was no sound of hearing. The place grew terrible to him. But his mother had sent him there, and into it he must go! He must at least learn whether it was indeed abandoned! There was false play! he kept repeating to himself; but what was it? where and how was it to be met?

As to getting into the house there was no difficulty. He had but to climb two walls to get to the door of Baliol's tower, and the key of that he always carried. If he had not had it, he would yet soon have got in; he knew the place better than any one else about it. Happily he had left the door locked when he went away, else probably they would have secured it otherwise. He entered softly, and, with a strange feeling of dread, went winding up the stair to his room—slowly, because he did not yet know at all what he was to do. If there were no false play, surely at least Mrs. Brookes would have written to tell him they were going! If only he could learn where she was! Before he reached the top he found himself very weary. He staggered in, and fell on his bed in the dark.

But he could not rest. The air seemed stifling. The storm had lulled, but the atmosphere was full of thunder. He got up and opened the window. A little breath came in and revived him; then came a little wind, and in the wind the moan of its harp. I'

woke many memories. There again was the lightning! The thunder broke with a great bellowing roar among the roofs and chimneys. It was to his mind! He went out on the roof, and mechanically took his way toward the nest of the music. At the base of the chimneys he sat down, and stared into the darkness. The lightning came; he saw the sea lie watching like a perfect peace to take up drift souls, and the land bordering it like a waste of dread; then the darkness swallowed both; and the thunder came so loud that it not only deafened but seemed to blind him beyond the darkness, that his brain turned to a lump of clay. Then came a silence, and the silence was like a deeper deafness. But from the deafness burst and trickled a faint doubtful stream: could it be a voice, calling, calling, from a great distance? Was he the fool of weariness and excitement, or did he actually hear his own name? Whose voice could it be but lady Arctura's, calling to him from the spirit world! They had killed her, and she was calling to let him know she was in the land of liberty! With that came another flash and another roar of thunder—and there was the voice again: "Mr. Grant! Mr. Grant! come, come! You promised!" Did he actually hear the words? They sounded so far away that it seemed as if he ought not to hear them. But could the voice be from the spirit-land? Would she claim his promise thence, tempting him thither? She would not! And she knew he would not go before his hour, if all the spirits on the other side were calling him. But he had heard of voices from far away, while those who called were yet in the body! If she would but say whither, he would follow her that moment! Once more it came, but very faint; he could not tell what it said. A wail of the ghost-music followed close.—God in heaven! could she be down in the chapel? He sprang to his feet. With superhuman energy he leapt up and caught the edge of the cleft, drew himself up till his mouth reached it, and cried aloud, "Lady Arctura!"

There came no answer.

"I am stupid as death!" he said to himself: "I have let her call me in vain!"

"I am coming!" he cried again, revived with sudden joy. He dropped on the roof, and sped down the stair to the door that opened on the second floor. All was dark as underground, but he knew the way so well he needed but a little guidance from his hands. He hurried to lady Arctura's chamber, and the spot where the press stood, ready with one shove to send it yards out of his way. *There was no press there!*—nothing but a smooth, cold, damp wall! His heart sank within him. Was he in a terrible dream? No, no! he had but made a mistake—had

trusted too much to his knowledge of the house, and was not where he thought he was! He struck a light. Alas! alas! he was where he had intended! It was her room! There was the wardrobe, but nearer the door! Where it had stood was no recess!—nothing but a great patch of fresh plaster! It was no dream, but a true horror!

Instinctively clutching his skene dhu, he darted to the great stair. It *must* have been the voice of Arctura he had heard! She was walled up in the chapel!

Down the stair, with swift noiseless foot he sped, and stopped at the door of the half-way room. It was locked!

There was but one way left! To the foot of the stair he shot. Good heavens! if that way also should have been known to the earl! He crept through the little door underneath the stair, feeling with his hands ere his body was through: the arch was open! In an instant he was in the crypt.

But now to get up through the opening into the passage above —stopped with a heavy slab! He sprang at the steep slope of the window-sill, but there was no hold, and as often as he sprang he slipped down again. He tried and tried until he was worn out and almost in despair. She might be dying! he was close to her! he could not reach her! He stood still for a moment to think. To his mind came the word, "He that believeth shall not make haste." He thought with himself, "God cannot help men with wisdom when their minds are in too great a tumult to hear what he says!" He tried to lift up his heart and make a silence in his soul.

As he stood he seemed to see, through the dark, the gloomy place as it first appeared when he threw in the lighted letter. All at once he started from his quiescence, dropped on his hands and knees, and crawled until he found the flat stone like a grave-stone. Out came his knife, and he dug away the earth at one end, until he could get both hands under it. Then he heaved it from the floor, and shifting it along, got it under the opening in the wall.

CHAPTER LXXIV.

A MORAL FUNGUS.

SPIRITUAL insanity, cupidity, cruelty, and possibly immediate demoniacal temptation had long been working in and on a mind that had now ceased almost to distinguish between the real and the unreal. Every man who bends the energies of an immortal spirit to further the ends and objects of his lower being, fails so to distinguish; but with the earl the blindness had wrought outward as well as inwardly, so that he was even unable, during considerable portions of his life, to tell whether things took place outside or inside him. Nor did this trouble him—he was past caring. He would argue that what equally affected him had an equal right to be by him regarded as existent. He paid no heed to the different natures of the two kinds of existence, their different laws, and the different demands they made upon the two consciousnesses; he had in fact, by a long course of disobedience growing to utter disuse of conscience, arrived nearly at non-individuality. In regard to what was outside him he was but a mirror, in regard to what was inside him a mere vessel of imperfectly interacting forces. And now his capacities and incapacities together had culminated in a hideous plot, in which it would be hard to say whether the folly, the crime, or the cunning predominated: he had made up his mind that, if the daughter of his brother refused to wed her cousin, and so carry out what he asserted to have been the declared wish of her father, she should go after her father, and leave her property to the next heir, so that if not in one way then in another the law of nature might be fulfilled, and title and property united without the intervention of a marriage. As to any evil that therein might be imagined to befall his niece, he quoted the words of Hamlet—"Since no man has ought of what he leaves, what is't to leave betimes?"—she would be no worse than she must have been when the few years of her natural pilgrimage were of necessity over: the difference to her was not worth thinking of beside the difference to the family! At the same time perhaps a scare might serve, and she would consent to marry Forgue to escape a frightful end!

The moment Donal was gone, he sent Forgue to London, and set himself to overcome the distrust of him which he could not but see had for some time been growing in her. With the sweet prejudices of a loving nature to assist him, he soon prevailed so

far that, without much entreaty, she consented to accompany him to London—for a month or so, he said, while Davie was gone. The proposal had charms for her: she had been there with her father when a mere child, and never since. She wrote to Donal to let him know: how it was that her letter never reached him, it is hardly needful to inquire.

The earl, in order, he said, to show his recognition of her sweet compliance, made arrangements for posting it all the way. He would take her by the road he used to travel himself when he was a young man: she should judge whether more had not been lost than gained by rapidity! Whatever shortened any natural process, he said, simply shortened life itself. Simmons should go before, and find a suitable place for them!

They were hardly gone when Mrs. Brookes received a letter pretendedly from the clergyman of the parish, in a remote part of the south, where her mother, now a very old woman, lived, saying she was at the point of death, and could not die in peace without seeing her daughter. She went at once.

The scheme was a madman's, excellently contrived for the instant object, but with no outlook for immediately resulting perils.

After the first night on the road, he turned across country, and a little towards home; after the next night, he drove straight back, but as it was by a different road, Arctura suspected nothing. When they came within a few hours of the castle, they stopped at a little inn for tea; there he contrived to give her a certain dose. At the next place where they stopped, he represented her as his daughter taken suddenly ill: he must go straight home with her, however late they might be. Giving an imaginary name to their destination. and keeping on the last post-boy who knew nothing of the country, he directed him so as completely to bewilder him, with the result that he set them down at the castle supposing it a different place, and in a different part of the country. The thing was after the earl's own heart; he delighted in making a fool of a fellow-mortal. He sent him away so as not to enter the town: it was of importance his return should not be known.

It is a marvel he could effect what followed; but he had the remnants of great strength, and when under influences he knew too well how to manage, was for the time almost as powerful as ever: he got his victim to his room on the stair, and thence through the oak door.

CHAPTER LXXV.

THE PORCH OF HADES.

WHEN Arctura woke from her unnatural sleep, she lay a while without thought, then began to *localize* herself. The last place she recalled was the inn where they had tea: she must have been there taken ill, she thought, and was now in a room of the same. It was quite dark: they might have left a light by her! She lay comfortably enough, but had a suspicion that the place was not over clean, and was glad to find herself not undrest. She turned on her side: something pulled her by the wrist. She must have a bracelet on, and it was entangled in the coverlet! She tried to unclasp it, but could not: which of her bracelets could it be? There was something attached to it!—a chain—a thick chain! How odd! What could it mean? She lay quiet, slowly waking to fuller consciousness.—Was there not a strange air, a dull odour in the room? Undefined as it was, she had smelt it before, and not long since!—It was the smell of the lost chapel!—But that was at home in the castle! she had left it two days before! Was she going out of her mind?

The dew of agony burst from her forehead. She would have started up, but was pulled hard by the wrist! She cried on God.—Yes, she was lying on the very spot where that heap of woman-dust had lain! she was manacled with the same ring from which that woman's arm had wasted—the decay of centuries her slow redeemer! Her being recoiled so wildly from the horror, that for a moment she seemed on the edge of madness. But madness is not the sole refuge from terror! Where the door of the spirit has once been opened wide to God, there is he, the *present* help in time of trouble! With him in the house, it is not only that we need fear nothing, but that is there which in its own being and nature casts out fear. God and fear cannot be together. It is a God far off that causes fear. "In thy presence is fulness of joy." Such a sense of absolute helplessness overwhelmed Arctura that she felt awake in her an endless claim upon the protection of her original, the source of her being. And what sooner would any father have of his children than action on such claim! God is always calling us as his children, and when we call him as our father, then, and not till then, does he begin to be satisfied. And with that there fell upon Arctura a kind of sleep, which yet

was not sleep; it was a repose such as perhaps is the sleep of a spirit.

Again the external began to intrude. She pictured to herself what the darkness was hiding. Her feelings when first she came down into the place returned on her memory. The tide of terror began again to rise. It rose and rose, and threatened to become monstrous. She reasoned with herself: had she not been brought in safety through its first and most dangerous inroad?—but reason could not outface terror. It was fear, the most terrible of all terrors, that she feared. Then again woke her faith: if the night hideth not from him, neither does the darkness of fear!

It began to thunder, first with a low distant muttering roll, then with a loud and near bellowing. Was it God coming to her? Some are strangely terrified at thunder; Arctura had the child's feeling that it was God that thundered: it comforted her as with the assurance that God was near. As she lay and heard the great organ of the heavens, its voice seemed to grow articulate; God was calling to her, and saying, "Here I am, my child! be not afraid!"

Then she began to reason with herself that the worst that could happen to her was to lie there till she died of hunger, and that could not be so very bad! And therewith across the muttering thunder came a wail of the ghost-music. She started: had she not heard it a hundred times before, as she lay there in the dark alone? Was she only now for the first time waking up to it—she, the lady they had shut up there to die—where she had lain for ages, with every now and then that sound of the angels singing, far above her in the blue sky?

She was beginning to wander. She reasoned with herself, and dismissed the fancy; but it came and came again, mingled with real memories, mostly of the roof, and Donal.

By and by she fell asleep, and woke in a terror which seemed to have been growing in her sleep. She sat up, and stared into the dark. From where stood the altar, seemed to rise and approach her a form of deeper darkness. She heard nothing, saw nothing, but something was there. It came nearer. It was but a fancy; she knew it; but the fancy assumed to be: the moment she gave way, and acknowledged it, that moment it would have the reality it had been waiting for, and clasp her in its skeleton-arms! She cried aloud, but it only came nearer; it was about to seize her!

A sudden, divine change!—her fear was gone, and in its place a sense of absolute safety: there was nothing in all the universe to be afraid of! It was a night of June, with roses, roses everywhere! Glory be to the Father! But how was it? Had he sent

her mother to think her full of roses? Why her mother? God himself is the heart of every rose that ever bloomed! She would have sung aloud for joy, but no voice came; she could not utter a sound. What a thing this would be to tell Donal Grant! This poor woman cried, and God heard her, and saved her out of all her distresses! The father had come to his child! The cry had gone from her heart into his!

If she died there, would Donal come one day and find her? No! No! She would speak to him in a dream, and beg him not to go near the place! She would not have him see her lie like that he and she standing together had there looked upon!

With that came Donal's voice, floated and rolled in music and thunder. It came from far away; she did not know whether she fancied or really heard it. She would have responded with a great cry, but her voice vanished in her throat. Her joy was such that she remembered nothing more.

CHAPTER LXXVI.

THE ANGEL OF THE LORD.

STANDING upon the edge of the stone leaned against the wall, Donal seized the edge of the slab which crossed the opening near the top, and drew himself up into the sloping window-sill. Pressing with all his might against the sides of the window, he succeeded at last in pushing up the slab so far as to get a hold with one hand on the next to it. Then slowly turning himself on his side, while the whole weight of the stone rested on his fingers, he got the other hand also through the crack. This effected, he hauled and pushed himself up with his whole force, careless of what might happen to his head. The top of it came bang against the stone, and lifted it so far that he got head and neck through. The thing was done! With one more Herculean lift of his body and the stone together, like a man rising from the dead, he rose from the crypt into the passage.

But the door of the chapel would not yield to a gentle push.

"My lady," he cried, "don't be afraid. I must make a noise. It's only Donal Grant! I'm going to drive the door open."

She heard the words! They woke her from her swoon of joy. "Only Donal Grant!" What less of an *only* could there be in the world for her! Was he not the messenger who raised the dead!

She tried to speak, but not a word would come. Donal drew back a pace, and sent such a shoulder against the door that it flew to the wall, then fell with a great crash on the floor.

"Where are you, my lady?" he cried.

But still she could not speak.

He began feeling about.

"Not on that terrible bed!" she heard him murmur.

Fear lest in the darkness he should not find her, gave her back her voice.

"I don't mind it now!" she said feebly.

"Thank God!" cried Donal; "I've found you at last!"

Worn out, he sank on his knees, with his head on the bed, and fell a sobbing like a child.

She would have put out her hand through the darkness to find him, but the chain checked it. He heard the rattle of it, and understood.

"Chained too, my dove!" he said, but in Gaelic.

His weakness was over. He thanked God, and took courage. New life rushed through every vein. He rose to his feet in conscious strength.

"Can you strike a light, and let me see you, Donal?" said Arctura.

Then first she called him by his Christian name: it had been so often in her heart if not on her lips that night!

The dim light wasted the darkness of the long buried place, and for a moment they looked at each other. She was not so changed as Donal had feared to find her—hardly so changed to him as he was to her. Terrible as had been her trial, it had not lasted long, and had been succeeded by a heavenly joy. She was paler than usual, yet there was a rosy flush over her beautiful face. Her hand was stretched towards him, its wrist clasped by the rusty ring, and tightening the chain that held it to the post.

"How pale and tired you look!" she said.

"I am a little tired," he answered. "I came almost without stopping. My mother sent me. She said I must come, but she did not tell me why."

"It was God sent you," said Arctura.

Then she briefly told him what she knew of her own story.

"How did he get the ring on to your wrist?" said Donal.

He looked closer and saw that her hand was swollen, and the skin abraded.

"He forced it on!" he said. "How it must hurt you!"

"It does hurt now you speak of it," she replied. "I did not notice it before.—Do you suppose he left me here to die?"

"Who can tell!" returned Donal. "I suspect he is more of a madman than we knew. I wonder if a soul can be mad.—Yes; the devil must be mad with self-worship! Hell is the great madhouse of creation!"

"Take me away," she said.

"I must first get you free," answered Donal.

She heard him rise.

"You are not going to leave me?" she said.

"Only to get a tool or two."

"And after that?" she said.

"Not until you wish me," he answered. "I am your servant now—his no more."

CHAPTER LXXVII.

THE ANGEL OF THE DEVIL.

THERE came a great burst of thunder. It was the last of the storm. It bellowed and shuddered, went, and came rolling up again. It died away at last in the great distance, with a low continuous rumbling as if it would never cease. The silence that followed was like the Egyptian darkness; it might be felt.

Out of the tense heart of the silence came a faint sound. It came again and again, at regular intervals.

"That is my uncle's step!" said Arctura in a scared whisper through the dark.

It was plainly a slow step—far off, but approaching.

"I wonder if he has a light!" she added hurriedly. "He often goes in the dark without one. If he has you must get behind the altar."

"Do not speak a word," said Donal; "let him think you are asleep. If he has no light, I will stand so that he cannot come near the bed without coming against me. Do not be afraid; he shall not touch you."

The steps were coming nearer all the time. A door opened and shut. Then they were loud—they were coming along the gallery! They ceased. He was standing up there in the thick darkness!"

"Arctura!" said a deep, awful voice.

It was that of the earl. Arctura made no answer.

"Dead of fright!" muttered the voice. "All goes well. I will

go down and see. She might have proved as obstinate as the boys' mother!"

Again the steps began. They were coming down the stair. The door at the foot of it opened. The earl entered a step or two, then stopped. Through the darkness Donal seemed to know exactly where he stood. He knew also that he was fumbling for a match, and watched intently for the first spark. There came a sputter and a gleam, and the match failed. Ere he could try another, Donal made a swift blow at his arm. It knocked the box from his hand.

"Ha!" he cried, and there was terror in the cry, "she strikes at me through the dark!"

Donal kept very still. Arctura kept as still as he. The earl turned and went away.

"I will bring a candle!" he muttered.

"Now, my lady, we must make haste," said Donal. "Do you mind being left while I fetch my tools?"

"No—but make haste," she answered.

"I shall be back before him," he returned.

"Be careful you do not meet him," said Arctura.

There was no difficulty now, either in going or returning. He sped, and in a space that even to Arctura seemed short, was back. There was no time to use the file: he attacked the staple, and drew it from the bed-post, then wound the chain about her arm, and tied it there.

He had already made up his mind what to do with her. He had been inclined to carry her away from the house: Doory would take care of her! But he saw that to leave the enemy in possession would be to yield him an advantage. Awkward things might result from it! the tongues of inventive ignorance and stupidity would wag wildly! He would take her to her room, and there watch her as he would the pearl of price!

"There! you are free, my lady," he said. "Now come."

He took her hands, and she raised herself wearily.

"The air is so stifling!" she said.

"We shall soon have better!" answered Donal.

"Shall we go on the roof?" she said, like one talking in her sleep.

"I will take you to your own room," replied Donal. "—But I will not leave you," he added quickly, seeing a look of anxiety cloud her face, "—so long as your uncle is in the house."

"Take me where you will," rejoined Arctura.

There was no way but through the crypt: she followed him without hesitation. They crept through the little closet under the stair, and were in the hall of the castle.

As they went softly up the stair, Donal had an idea.

"He is not back yet!" he said: "we will take the key from the oak door; he will think he has mislaid it, and will not find out that you are gone. I wonder what he will do!"

Cautiously listening to be sure the earl was not there, he ran to the oak door, locked it, and brought away the key. Then they went to the room Arctura had last occupied.

The door was ajar; there was a light in the room. They went softly, and peeped in. The earl was there, turning over the contents of her writing-desk.

"He will find nothing," she whispered with a smile.

Donal led her away.

"We will go to your old room," he said. "The whole recess is built up with stone and lime: he cannot come near you that way!"

She made no objection. Donal secured the doors, lighted a fire, and went to look for food. They had agreed upon a certain knock, without which she was to open to none.

While she was yet changing the garments in which she had lain on the terrible bed, she heard the earl go by, and the door of his room close. Apparently he had concluded to let her pass the night without another visit: he had himself had a bad fright, and had probably not got over it. A little longer and she heard Donal's gentle signal at the door of the sitting-room. He had brought some biscuits and a little wine in the bottom of a decanter from the housekeeper's room: there was literally nothing in the larder, he said.

They sat down and ate the biscuits. Donal told his adventures. They agreed that she must write to the factor to come home at once, and bring his sister. Then Donal set to with his file upon the ring: her hand was much too swollen to admit of its being removed as it had been put on. It was not easy to cut it, partly from the constant danger of hurting her swollen hand, partly that the rust filled and blunted the file.

"There!" he said at last, "you are free! And now, my lady, you must take some rest. The door to the passage is secure. Lock this one inside, and I will draw the sofa across it outside: if he come wandering in the night, and get into this room, he will not reach your door."

Weary as he was, Donal could not sleep much. In the middle of the night he heard the earl's door open, and watched and followed him. He went to the oak door, and tried in vain to open it.

"*She* has taken it!" he muttered, in what seemed to Donal an awe-struck voice.

All night long he roamed the house a spirit grievously tormented. In the gray of the morning, having perhaps persuaded himself that the whole affair was a trick of his imagination, he went back to his room.

In the morning Donal left the house, having first called to Arctura and warned her to lock the door of the sitting-room the moment he was gone. He ran all the way down to the inn, paid his bill, bought some things in the town for their breakfast, and taking the mare, rode up to the castle, and rang the bell. No notice was taken. He went and put up his animal, then let himself into the house by Baliol's tower, and began to sing. So singing he went up the great stair, and into and along the corridor where the earl lay.

The singing roused him, and brought him to his door in a rage. But the moment he saw Donal his countenance fell.

"What the devil are you doing here?" he said.

"They told me in the town you were in England, my lord!"

"I wrote to you," said the earl, "that we were gone to London, and that you need be in no haste to return. I trust you have not brought Davie with you?"

"I have not, my lord."

"Then make what haste back to him you can. He must not be alone with bumpkins! You may stay there with him till I send for you—only mind you go on with your studies. Now be off. I am at home but for a few hours on business, and leave again by the afternoon coach!"

"I do not go, my lord, until I have seen my mistress."

"Your mistress! Who, pray, is your mistress!"

"I am no longer in your service, my lord."

"Then what, in the name of God, have you done with my son?"

"In good time, my lord, when you have told me where my mistress is! I am in this house as lady Arctura's servant; and I desire to know where I shall find her."

"In London."

"What address, please your lordship? I will wait her orders here."

"You will leave this house at once," said the earl. "I will not have you here in both her ladyship's absence and my own."

"My lord, I am not ignorant how things stand: I am in lady Arctura's house; and here I remain till I receive her commands."

"Very well! By all means!"

"I ask you again for her address, my lord."

"Find it for yourself. You will not obey my orders: am I to obey yours?"

He turned on his heel, and flung to his door.

Donal went to lady Arctura. She was in the sitting-room, anxiously waiting his return. She had heard their voices, but nothing that passed. He told her what he had done; then produced his provisions, and together they prepared their breakfast. By and by they heard the earl come from his room, go here and there through the still house, and return to his apartment.

In the afternoon he left the house. They watched him away—ill able, apparently, even to crawl along. He went down the hill, nor once lifted his head. They turned and looked at each other. Profound pity for the wretched old man was the feeling of both. It was followed by one of intense relief and liberty.

"You would like to be rid of me now, my lady," said Donal; "but I don't see how I can leave you. Shall I go and fetch Miss Carmichael?"

"No, certainly," answered Arctura. "I cannot apply to her."

"It would be a pity to lose the advantage of your uncle's not knowing what has become of you."

"I wonder what he will do next! If I were to die now, the property would be his, and then Forgue's!"

"You can will it away, I suppose, my lady!" answered Donal.

Arctura stood thoughtful.

"Is Forgue a bad man, Mr. Grant?"

"I dare not trust him," answered Donal.

"Do you think he had any knowledge of this plot of his father's?"

"I cannot tell. I do not believe he would have left you to die in the chapel."

CHAPTER LXXVIII.

RESTORATION.

THE same afternoon, while Donal was reading to Arctura in the library, there came a loud ringing of the door-bell. Donal ran to see, and to his great delight, there was mistress Brookes, half wild with anxious terror.

"Is my leddy safe?" she cried—then clasped Donal in her arms and embraced him as if he had been her son.

From the moment she discovered herself fooled, she had been imagining all manner of terrible things—yet none so terrible as the truth. There was no end to her objurgations, exclamations, anathemas, and interjections.

"Now I can leave you in peace, my lady!" said Donal, who had not resumed his seat.

"Noo ye can bide whaur ye are, an' be thankfu'!" said mistress Brookes. "Wha daur meddle wi' ye, an' me i' the hoose! An' wha kens what the mad yerl, for mad I s' uphaud him, an' fit only to be lockit up—wha kens what he may do neist! Maister Grant, I can*not* lat ye oot o' the hoose."

"I was only going as far as mistress Comin's," replied Donal.

"Weel, ye can gang; but min' ye're hame i' gude time!"

"I thought of putting up there, but I will do as my lady pleases."

"Come home," said Arctura.

Donal went, and the first person he saw when he entered the house was Eppy. She turned instantly away, and left the room: he could not help seeing why.

The old woman welcomed him with her usual cordiality, but not her usual cheerfulness: he had scarcely noted since her husband's death any change on her manner till now: she looked weary of the world.

She sat down, smoothed her apron on her knees, gave him one glance in the face, then looked down at her hands, and said nothing.

"I ken what ails ye, Doory," said Donal; "but i' the name o' him 'at's awa', hearken til me.—The lass is no lost, naither is the Lord asleep. Yer lamb 's been sair misguidit, sair pluckit o' her bonny woo', but gien for that she haud the closer by the Lord's flock, she'll ken it wasna for want o' his care the tod got a grup o' her. It's a terrible pity for the bonny cratur, disgracin'

them 'at aucht her! What for winna yoong fowk believe them 'at speyks true, but wull believe them 'at tells them little but lees! Still, it's no as gien she had been stealin'! She's wrangt her puir sel', an' she's wrangt us a', an' she's wrangt the Lord; but for a' that ye canna luik doon upon her as upo' the man 'at's grown rich at the cost o' his neebours. There's mony a gran' prood leddy 'ill hae to stan' aside to let Eppy pass up, whan we're 'afore the richteous judge."

"Eh, but ye speyk like my Anerew!" cried the poor woman, wiping her old eyes with her rough apron. "I s' do what I can for her; but there's no hidin' o' 't!"

"Hidin' o' 't!" cried Donal. "The Lord forbid! Sic things are no to be hidden! Sae lang 's she 's i' the warl', the thing has to be kenned o' a' 'at come nigh her. She maun beir her burden, puir lass! The Lord he'll lichten 't til her, but he'll hae naething smugglet up. That's no the w'y o' his kingdom!—I suppose there's nae doobt wha?"

"Nane. The Lord forbid!"

Two days after, Mr. Graeme and his sister returned, and at lady Arctura's request took up their abode at the castle. She told them that of late she had become convinced her uncle was no longer capable of attending to her affairs; that he was gone to London; that she had gone away with him, and was supposed to be with him still, though she had returned, and he did not know where she was. She did not wish him to know, but desired for the present to remain concealed. She had her reasons; and requested therefore as a personal favour that they would not once or to any one allude to her being at the castle. Mr. Graeme would in the meantime be so good as make himself acquainted, so far as possible, with the state of affairs between her and her uncle.

In the course of the investigations thereupon following, it became clear that a large portion of the moneys of the estate received by his lordship were nowise accounted for. Lady Arctura directed that further inquiry should in the meantime be stayed, but that no more money should be handed over to him.

For some time the factor heard nothing from his lordship. At length came instructions as to the forwarding of money, Forgue writing and his father signing. Mr. Graeme replied, excusing himself as he could, but sending no money. They wrote again. Again he excused himself. The earl threatened. Mr. Graeme took no heed. His lordship continued to demand and threaten, but neither he nor his son appeared. The factor at length wrote that he would pay no money but to lady Arctura.

The earl himself wrote in reply, saying—had he been out of the country that he did not know she was dead and six weeks in her grave? Again the factor did not reply.

Donal rode back to Glashgar, and brought Davie home. Lessons were resumed, and Arctura took her full share in them.

Soon all about the castle was bustle and labour—masons and carpenters busy from morning to night. The wall that masked the windows of the chapel was pulled down; the windows, of stained glass, with never a crack, were cleaned; the passage under them was opened to the great stair; lady Arctura had a small sweet-toned organ built in the little gallery, and the mural stair from her own room opened again, that she might go down when she pleased to play on it—sometimes, in south-easterly winds, to listen to the aeolian harp dreaming out the music of the spheres.

In the process of removing the bed, much of it crumbled to dust. The carved tester and back were set up, the one over the great chimney-piece in the hall, the other over that in Arctura's room. The altar was replaced where the bed had been. The story of the finding of the lost chapel was written by Donal, and placed by Arctura among the records of the family.

But it soon became evident that what she had passed through had exercised a hurtful influence on lady Arctura's health. She was almost always happy, but her strength at times would suddenly desert her. Both Donal and mistress Brookes regarded her with some anxiety.

Her organ, to which she gave more labour than she was quite equal to, was now one of her main delights. Often would its chords be heard creeping through the long ducts and passages of the castle: either for a small instrument its tone was peculiarly penetrating, or the chapel was the centre of the system of the house. On the roof would Donal often sit listening to the sounds that rose through the shaft—airs and harmonies freed by her worshipping fingers—rejoicing to think how her spirit was following the sounds, guided by them in lovely search after her native country.

One day she went on playing till she forgot everything but her music, and almost unconsciously began to sing "The Lord is mindful of his own." She was unaware that she had two listeners—one on the roof above, one in the chapel below.

When twelve months were come and gone since his departure, the earl one bright morning approached the door of the castle, half doubting, half believing it his own: he was determined on dismissing the factor after rigorous examination of his accounts;

and he wanted to see Davie. He had driven to the stables, and thence walked out on the uppermost terrace, passing the chapel without observing its unmasked windows. The great door was standing open: he went in, and up the stair, haunted by sounds of music he had been hearing ever since he stepped on the terrace.

But on the stair was a door he had never seen! Who dared make changes in *his* house? The thing was bewildering! But he was accustomed to be bewildered.

He opened the door—plainly a new one—and entered a gloomy little passage, lighted from a small aperture unfit to be called a window. The under side of the bare steps of a narrow stone stair were above his head. Had he or had he not ever seen the place before? On the right was a door. He went to it, opened it, and the hitherto muffled music burst loud on his ear. He started back in dismal apprehension:—there was the chapel, wide open to the eye of day!—clear and clean!—gone the hideous bed! gone the damp and the dust! while the fresh air trembled with the organ-breath rushing and rippling through it, and setting it in sweetest turmoil! He had never had such a peculiar experience! He had often doubted whether things were or were not projections from his own brain; he moved and acted in a world of subdued fact and enhanced fiction; he knew that sometimes he could not tell the one from the other; but never had he had the apparently real and the actually unreal brought so much face to face with each other! Everything was as clear to his eyes as in their prime of vision, and yet there *could* be no reality in what he saw!

Ever since he left the castle he had been greatly uncertain whether the things that seemed to have taken place there, had really taken place. He got himself in doubt about them the moment he failed to find the key of the oak door. When he asked himself what then could have become of his niece, he would reply that doubtless she was all right: she did not want to marry Forgue, and had slipped out of the way: she had never cared about the property! To have their own will was all women cared about! Would his factor otherwise have dared such liberties with him, the lady's guardian? He had not yet rendered his accounts, or yielded his stewardship. When she died the property would be his! if she was dead, it was his! She would never have dreamed of willing it away from him! She did not know she could: how should she? girls never thought about such things! Besides she would not have the heart: he had loved her as his own flesh and blood!

At intervals, nevertheless, he was assailed, at times overwhelmed, by the partial conviction that he had starved her to death in the chapel. Then he was tormented as with all the furies of hell. In his night visions he would see her lie wasting, hear her moaning, and crying in vain for help: the hardest heart is yet at the mercy of a roused imagination. He saw her body in its progressive stages of decay as the weeks passed, and longed for the process to be over, that he might go back, and pretending to have just found the lost room, carry it away, and have it honourably buried! Should he take it for granted that it had lain there for centuries, or suggest it must be lady Arctura—that she had got shut up there, like the bride in the chest? If he could but find an old spring lock to put on the door! But people were so plaguy sharp nowadays! They found out everything!—he could not afford to have *everything* found out!—God himself must not be allowed to know everything!

He stood staring. As he stood and stared, his mind began to change: perhaps, after all, what he saw, might *be!* The whole thing it had displaced must then be a fancy—a creation of the dreaming brain! God in heaven! if it could but be *proven* that he had never done it! All the other wicked things he was—or supposed himself guilty of—some of them so heavy that it had never seemed of the smallest use to repent of them—all the rest might be forgiven him!—But what difference would that make to the fact that he had done them? He could never take his place as a gentleman where all was known! They made such a fuss about a sin or two, that a man went and did worse out of pure despair!

But if he had never murdered anybody! In that case he could almost consent there should be a God! he could almost even thank him!—For what! That he was not to be damned for the thing he had not done—a thing he had had the misfortune to dream he had done—God never interfering to protect him from the horrible fancy? What was the good of a God that would not do that much for you—that left his creatures to make fools of themselves, and only laughed at them!—Bah! There was life in the old dog yet! If only he *knew* the thing for a fancy!

The music ceased, and the silence was a shock to him. Again he began to stare about him. He looked up. Before him in the air hovered the pale face of the girl he had—or had not murdered! It was one of his visions—but not therefore more unreal than any other appearance: she came from the world of his imagination—so real to him that in expectant moods it was the world into which he was to step the moment he left the body.

She looked sweetly at him! She was come to forgive his sins! Was it then true? Was there no sin of murder on his soul? Was she there to assure him that he might yet hope for the world to come? He stretched out his arms to her. She turned away. He thought she had vanished. The next moment she was in the chapel, but he did not hear her, and stood gazing up. She threw her arms around him. The contact of the material startled him with such a revulsion, that he uttered a cry, staggered back, and stood looking at her in worse perplexity still. He had done the awful thing, yet had not done it! He stood as one bound to know the thing that could not be.

"Don't be frightened, uncle," said Arctura. "I am not dead. The sepulchre is the only resurrection-house! Uncle, uncle! thank God with me."

The earl stood motionless. Strange thoughts passed through him at their will. Had her presence dispelled darkness and death, and restored the lost chapel to the light of day? Had she haunted it ever since, dead yet alive, watching for his return to pardon him? Would his wife so receive him at the last with forgiveness and endearment? His eyes were fixed upon her. His lips moved tremulously once or twice, but no word came. He turned from her, glanced round the place, and said,

"It is a great improvement!"

I wonder how it would be with souls if they waked up and found all their sins but hideous dreams! How many would loathe the sin? How many would remain capable of doing all again? But few, perhaps no burdened souls can have any idea of the power that lies in God's forgiveness to relieve their consciousness of defilement. Those who say, "Even God cannot destroy the fact!" care more about their own cursed shame than their Father's blessed truth! Such will rather excuse than confess. When a man heartily confesses, leaving excuse to God, the truth makes him free, he knows that the evil has gone from him, as a man knows that he is cured of his plague.

"I did the thing," he says, "but I could not do it now. I am the same, yet not the same. I confess, I would not hide it, but I loathe it—ten times the more that the evil thing was mine."

Had the earl been able to say thus, he would have felt his soul a cleansed chapel, new-opened to the light and air;—nay, better—a fresh-watered garden, in which the fruits of the spirit had begun to grow! God's forgiveness is as the burst of a spring morning into the heart of winter. His autumn is the paying of the uttermost farthing. To let us go without that would be the pardon of a demon, not the forgiveness of the eternally loving

God. But—*Not yet, alas, not yet!* has to be said over so many souls!

Arctura was struck dumb. She turned and walked out upon the great stair, her uncle following her. All the way up to the second floor she felt as if he were about to stab her in the back, but she would not look behind her. She went straight to her room, and heard her uncle go on to his. She rang her bell, sent for Donal, and told him what had passed.

"I will go to him," said Donal.

Arctura said nothing more, thus leaving the matter entirely in his hands.

Donal found him lying on the couch.

"My lord," he said, "you must be aware of the reasons why you should not present yourself here!"

The earl started up in one of his ready rages:—*they* were real enough! With epithets of contemptuous hatred, he ordered Donal from the room and the house. Donal answered nothing till the rush of his wrath had abated.

"My lord," he said, "there is nothing I would not do to serve your lordship. But I have no choice but tell you that if you do not walk out, you shall be expelled!"

"Expelled, you dog!"

"Expelled, my lord. The would-be murderer of his hostess must at least be put out of the house."

"Good heavens!" cried the earl, changing his tone with an attempted laugh, "has the poor, hysterical girl succeeded in persuading a man of your sense to believe her childish fancies?"

"I believe every word my lady says, my lord. I *know* that you had nearly murdered her."

The earl caught up the poker and struck at his head. Donal avoided the blow. It fell on the marble chimney-piece. While his arm was yet jarred by the impact, Donal wrenched the poker from him.

"My lord," he said, "with my own hands I drew the staple of the chain that fastened her to the bed on which you left her to die! You were yet in the house when I did so."

"You damned rascal, you stole the key. If it had not been for that I should have gone to her again. I only wanted to bring her to reason!"

"But as you had lost the key, rather than expose your cruelty, you went away, and left her to perish! You wanted her to die unless you could compel her to marry your son, that the title and property might go together; and that when with my own ears I heard your lordship tell that son that he had no right to any title!"

"What a man may say in a rage goes for nothing," answered the earl, sulkily rather than fiercely.

"But not what a woman writes in sorrow!" rejoined Donal. "I know the truth from the testimony of her you called your wife, as well as from your own mouth!"

"The testimony of the dead, and at second hand, will hardly be received in court!" returned the earl.

"If after your lordship's death, the man now called lord Forgue dares assume the title of Morven, I will publish what I know. In view of that, your lordship had better furnish him with the vouchers of his mother's marriage. My lord, I again beg you to leave the house."

The earl cast his eyes round the walls as if looking for a weapon. Donal took him by the arm.

"There is no farther room for ceremony," he said. "I am sorry to be rough with your lordship, but you compel me. Please remember I am the younger and the stronger man."

As he spoke he let the earl feel the ploughman's grasp: it was useless to struggle. His lordship threw himself on the couch.

"I will *not* leave the house. I am come home to die," he yelled. "I'm dying now, I tell you. I cannot leave the house! I have no money. Forgue has taken all."

"You owe a large sum to the estate!" said Donal.

"It is lost—all lost, I tell you! I have nowhere to go to! I am dying!"

He looked so utterly wretched that Donal's heart smote him. He stood back a little, and gave himself time.

"You would wish then to retire, my lord, I presume?" he said.

"Immediately—to be rid of you!" the earl answered.

"I fear, my lord, if you stay, you will not soon be rid of me! Have you brought Simmons with you?"

"No, damn him! he is like all the rest of you: he has left me!"

"I will help you to bed, my lord."

"Go about your business. I will get myself to bed."

"I will not leave you except in bed," rejoined Donal with decision; and ringing the bell, he desired the servant to ask mistress Brookes to come to him.

She came instantly. Before the earl had time even to look at her, Donal asked her to get his lordship's bed ready:—if she would not mind doing it herself, he said, he would help her: he must see his lordship to bed.

She looked a whole book at him, but said nothing. Donal returned her gaze with one of quiet confidence, and she under-

stood it. What it said was, "I know what I am doing, mistress Brookes. My lady must not turn him out. I will take care of him."

"What are you two whispering at there?" cried the earl. "Here am I at the point of death, and you will not even let me go to bed!"

"Your room will be ready in a few minutes, my lord," said Mrs. Brookes; and she and Donal went to work in earnest, but with the door open between the rooms.

When it was ready,

"Now, my lord," said Donal, "will you come?"

"When you are gone. I will have none of your cursed help!"

"My lord, I am not going to leave you."

With much grumbling, and a very ill grace, his lordship submitted, and Donal got him to bed.

"Now put that cabinet by me on the table," he said.

The cabinet was that in which he kept his drugs, and had not been touched since he left it.

Donal opened the window, took up the cabinet, and threw it out.

With a bellow like that of a bull, the earl sprang out of bed, and just as the crash came from below, ran at Donal where he stood shutting the window, as if he would have sent him after the cabinet. Donal caught him and held him fast.

"My lord," he said, "I will nurse you, serve you, do anything, everything for you; but for the devil I'll be damned if I move hand or foot! Not one drop of hellish stuff shall pass your lips while I am with you!"

"But I am dying! I shall die of the horrors!" shrieked the earl, struggling to get to the window, as if he might yet do something to save his precious extracts, tinctures, essences, and compounds.

"We will send for the doctor," said Donal. "A very clever young fellow has come to the town since you left: perhaps he can help you. I will do what I can to make you give your life fair play."

"Come, come! none of that damned rubbish! My life is of no end of value to me! Besides, it's too late. If I were young now, with a constitution like yours, and the world before me, there might be some good in a paring or two of self-denial; but *you* wouldn't stab your murderer for fear of the clasp knife closing on your hand! *you* would not fire your pistol at him for fear of its bursting and blowing your brains out!"

"I have no desire to keep you alive, my lord; but I would give my life to let you get some of the good of this world before

you pass to the next. To lengthen your life infinitely, I would not give you a single drop of any one of those cursed drugs!"

He rang the bell again.

"You're a friendly fellow!" grunted his lordship, and went back to his bed to ponder how to gain the solace of his passion.

Mrs. Brookes came.

"Will you please send to Mr. Avory, the new surgeon," said Donal, "and ask him, in my name, to come to the castle."

The earl was so ill, however, as to be doubtful, much as he desired them, whether, while rendering him for the moment less sensible to them, any of his drugs would do no other than increase his sufferings. He lay with closed eyes, a strange expression of pain mingled with something like fear every now and then passing over his face. I doubt if his conscience troubled him. It is in general those, I think, who through comparatively small sins have come to see the true nature of them, whose consciences trouble them greatly. Those who have gone from bad to worse through many years of moral decay, are seldom troubled as other men, or have any bands in their death. His lordship, it is true, suffered terribly at times because of the things he had done; but it was through the medium of a roused imagination rather than a roused conscience: the former deals with consequences; the latter with the deeds themselves.

He declared he would see no doctor but his old attendant Dowster, yet all the time was longing for the young man to appear: he *might*—who could tell?—save him from the dreaded jaws of death!

He came. Donal went to him. He had summoned him, he said, without his lordship's consent, but believed he would see him; the earl had been long in the habit of using narcotics and stimulants, though not alcohol, he thought; he trusted Mr. Avory would give his sanction to the entire disuse of them, for they were killing him, body and soul.

"To give them up at once and entirely would cost him considerable suffering," said the doctor.

"He knows that, and does not in the least desire to give them up. It is absolutely necessary he should be delivered from the passion."

"If I am to undertake the case, it must be after my own judgment," said the doctor.

"You must undertake two things, or give up the case," persisted Donal.

"I may as well hear what they are."

"One is, that you make his final deliverance from the habit

your object; the other, that you will give no medicine into his own hands."

"I agree to both; but all will depend on his nurse."

"I will be his nurse."

The doctor went to see his patient. The earl gave one glance at him, recognized firmness, and said not a word. But when he would have applied to his wrist an instrument recording in curves the motions of the pulse, he would not consent. He would have no liberties taken with him, he said.

"My lord, it is but to inquire into the action of your heart," said Mr. Avory.

"I'll have no spying into my heart! It acts just like other people's!"

The doctor put his instrument aside, and laid his finger on the pulse instead: his business was to help, not to conquer, he said to himself: if he might not do what he would, he would do what he could.

While he was with the earl, Donal found lady Arctura, and told her all he had done. She thanked him for understanding her.

CHAPTER LXXIX.

A SLOW TRANSITION.

A DREARY time followed. Sometimes the patient would lie awake half the night, howling with misery, and accusing Donal of heartless cruelty. He knew as well as he what would ease his pain and give him sleep, but not a finger would he move to save him! He was taking the meanest of revenges! What did it matter to him what became of his soul! Surely it was worse to hate as he made him hate than to swallow any amount of narcotics!

"I tell you, Grant," he said once, "I was never so cruel to those I treated worst. There's nothing in the Persian hells, which beat all the rest, to come up to what I go through for want of my comfort. Promise to give it me, and I will tell you where to find some."

As often as Donal refused he would break out in a torrent of curses, then lie still for a space.

"How do you think you will do without it," Donal once rejoined, "when you find yourself bodiless in the other world?"

"I'm not there yet! When that comes, it will be under new conditions, if not unconditioned altogether. We'll take the world we have. So, my dear boy, just go and get me what I want. There are the keys!"

"I dare not."

"You wish to kill me!"

"I wouldn't keep you alive to eat opium. I have other work than that. Not a finger would I move to save a life for such a life. But I would willingly risk my own to make you able to do without it. There would be some good in that!"

"Oh, damn your preaching!"

But the force of the habit abated a little. Now and then it seemed to return as strong as ever, but the fit went off again. His sufferings plainly decreased.

The doctor, having little yet of a practice, was able to be with him several hours every day, so that Donal could lie down. As he grew better, Davie, or mistress Brookes, or lady Arctura would sit with him. But Donal was never farther off than the next room. The earl's madness was the worst of any, a moral madness: it could not fail to affect the brain, but had not yet put him beyond his own control. Repeatedly had Donal been on the verge of using force to restrain him, but had not yet found himself absolutely compelled to do so: fearless of him, he postponed it always to the very last, and the last had not yet arrived.

The gentle ministrations of his niece by and by seemed to touch him. He was growing to love her a little. He would smile when she came into the room, and ask her how she did. Once he sat looking at her for some time—then said,

"I hope I did not hurt you much."

"When?" she asked.

"Then," he answered.

"Oh, no; you did not hurt me—much!"

"Another time, I was very cruel to your aunt: do you think she will forgive me!"

"Yes, I do."

"Then you have forgiven me?"

"Of course I have."

"Then of course God will forgive me too!"

"He will—if you leave off, you know, uncle."

"That's more than I can promise."

"If you try, he will help you."

"How can he? It is a second nature now!"

"He is your first nature. He can help you too by taking away the body and its nature together."

"You're a fine comforter! God will help me to be good by taking away my life! A nice encouragement to try! Hadn't I better kill myself and save him the trouble!"

"It's not the dying, uncle! no amount of dying would ever make one good. It might only make it less difficult to be good."

"But I might after all refuse to be good! I feel sure I should! He had better let me alone!"

"God can do more than that to compel us to be good—a great deal more than that! Indeed, uncle, we *must* repent."

He said no more for some minutes; then suddenly spoke again.

"I suppose you mean to marry that rascal of a tutor!" he said.

She started up, and called Donal. But to her relief he did not answer: he was fast asleep.

"He would not thank you for the suggestion, I fear," she said, sitting down again. "He is far above me!"

"Is there no chance for Forgue then?"

"Not the smallest. I would rather have died where you left me than——"

"If you love me, don't mention that!" he cried. "I was not myself—indeed I was not! I don't know now—that is, I can't believe sometimes I ever did it."

"Uncle, have you asked God to forgive you!"

"I have—a thousand times."

"Then I will never speak of it again."

In general, however, he was sullen, cantankerous, abusive. They were all compassionate to him, treating him like a spoiled, but not the less in reality a sickly child. Arctura thought her grandmother could not have brought him up well; more might surely have been made of him. But Arctura had him after a lifetime fertile in cause of self-reproach, had him in the net of sore sickness, at the mercy of the spirit of God. He was a bad old child—this much only the wiser for being old, that he had found the ways of transgressors hard.

One night Donal, hearing him restless, got up from the chair where he watched by him most nights, and saw him staring, but not seeing: his eyes showed that they regarded nothing material. After a moment he gave a great sigh, and his jaw fell. Donal thought he was dead. But presently he came to himself like one escaping from torture: a terrible dream was behind him, pulling at the skirts of his consciousness.

"I've seen her!" he said. "She's waiting for me to take me —but where I do not know. She did not look angry, but then she seldom looked angry when I was worst to her!—Grant, I beg of

you, don't lose sight of Davie. Make a man of him, and his mother will thank you. She was a good woman, his mother, though I did what I could to spoil her! It was no use! I never could!—and that was how she kept her hold of me. If I had succeeded, there would have been an end of her power, and a genuine heir to the earldom! What a damned fool I was to let it out! Who would have been the worse!"

"He's a heartless, unnatural rascal, though," he resumed, "and has made of me the fool I deserved to be made! His mother must see it was not my fault! I would have set things right if I could! But it was too late! And you tell me she has had a hand in letting the truth out—leaving her letters about!—That's some comfort! She was always fair, and will be the less hard on me. If I could see a chance of God being half as good to me as my poor wife. She *was* my wife! I will say it in spite of all the priests in the stupid universe! She was my wife, and deserved to be my wife; and if I had her now, I would marry her, because she would be foolish enough to like it, though I would not do it all the time she was alive, let her beg ever so! Where was the use of giving in, when I kept her in hand so easily that way? That was it! It was not that I wanted to do her any wrong. But you should keep the lead. A man mustn't play out his last trump and lose the lead. But then you never know about dying! If I had known my poor wife was going to die, I would have done whatever she wanted. We had merry times together! It was those cursed drugs that wiled the soul out of me, and then the devil went in and took its place!—There was curara in that last medicine, I'll swear!—Look you here now, Grant:—if there *were* any way of persuading God to give me a fresh lease of life! You say he hears prayer: why shouldn't you ask him? I would make you any promise you pleased—give you any security you wanted, hereafter to live a godly, righteous, and sober life."

"But," said Donal, "suppose God, reading your heart, saw that you would go on as bad as ever, and that to leave you any longer would only be to make it the more difficult for him to do anything with you afterwards?"

"He might give me a chance! It is hard to expect a poor fellow to be as good as he is himself!"

"The poor fellow was made in his image!" suggested Donal.

"Very poorly made then!" said the earl with a sneer. "We might as well have been made in some other body's image!"

Donal thought with himself.

"Did you ever know a good woman, my lord?" he asked.

"Know a good woman?—Hundreds of them!—The other sort

was more to *my* taste! but there was my own mother! She was rather hard on my father now and then, but she was a good woman."

"Suppose you had been in her image, what then?"

"You would have had some respect for me!"

"Then she was nearer the image of God than you?"

"Thousands of miles!"

"Did you ever know a bad woman?"

"Know a bad woman? Hundreds that would take your heart's blood as you slept to make a philtre with!"

"Then you saw a difference between such a woman and your mother?"

"The one was of heaven, the other of hell—that was all the little difference!"

"Did you ever know a bad woman grow better?"

"No, never.—Stop! let me see! I did once know a woman—she was a married woman too—that made it all the worse—all the better I mean: she took poison—in good earnest, and died—died, sir—died, I say—when she came to herself, and knew what she had done! That was the only woman I ever knew that grew better. How long she might have gone on better if she hadn't taken the poison, I can't tell. That fixed her good, you see!"

"If she had gone on, she might have got as good as your mother?"

"Oh, hang it! no; I did not say that!"

"I mean, with God teaching her all the time—for ten thousand years, say—and she always doing what he told her!"

"Oh, well! I don't know anything about that. I don't know what God had to do with my mother being so good! She was none of your canting sort!"

"There is an old story," said Donal, "of a man who was the very image of God, and ever so much better than the best of women."

"He couldn't have been much of a man then!"

"Were you ever afraid, my lord?"

"Yes, several times—many a time."

"That man never knew what fear was."

"By Jove!"

"His mother was good, and he was better: your mother was good, and you are worse! Whose fault is that?"

"My own; I'm not ashamed to confess it!"

"Would to God you were!" said Donal: "you shame your mother in being worse than she was. You were made in the image of God, but you don't look like him now any more than

you look like your mother. I have a father and mother, my lord, as like God as they can look!"

"Of course! of course! In their position there are no such temptations as in ours!"

"I am sure of one thing, my lord—that you will never be at any peace until you begin to show the image in which you were made. By that time you will care for nothing so much as that he should have his way with you and the whole world."

"It will be long before I come to that!"

"Probably; but you will never have a moment's peace till you begin. It is no use talking though. God has not made you miserable enough yet."

"I am more miserable than you can think."

"Why don't you cry to him to deliver you?"

"I would kill myself if it weren't for one thing."

"It is from yourself he would deliver you."

"I would, but that I want to put off seeing my wife as long as I can."

"I thought you wanted to see her!"

"I long for her sometimes more than tongue can tell."

"And you don't want to see her?"

"Not yet; not just yet. I should like to be a little better—to do something or other—I don't know what—first. I doubt if she would touch me now—with that small, firm hand she would catch hold of me with when I hurt her. By Jove, if she had been a man, she would have made her mark in the world! She had a will and a way with her! If it hadn't been that she loved me—me, do you hear, you dog!—though there's nobody left to care a worm-eaten nut about me, it makes me proud as Lucifer merely to think of it! I don't care if there's never another to love me to all eternity! I have been loved as never man was loved! All for my own sake, mind you! In the way of money I was no great catch; and for the rank, she never got any good of that, nor would if she had lived till I was earl; she had a conscience—which I never had—and would never have consented to be called countess. 'It will be no worse than passing for my wife now,' I would say. 'What's either but an appearance? What's any thing of all the damned humbug but appearance? One appearance is as good as another appearance!' She would only smile—smile fit to make a mule sad! And then when her baby was dying, and she wanted me to take her for a minute, and I wouldn't! She laid her down, and got what she wanted herself, and when she went to take the child again, the absurd little thing was—was—gone—dead, I mean gone dead, never to cry any more! There

it lay motionless, like a lump of white clay. She looked at me—and never—in this world—smiled again!—nor cried either—all I could do to make her!"

The wretched man burst into tears, and the heart of Donal gave a leap for joy. Common as tears are, fall as they may for the foolishest things, they may yet be such as to cause joy in paradise. The man himself may not know why he weeps, and his tears yet indicate his turning on his road. The earl was as far from a good man as man well could be; there were millions of spiritual miles betwixt him and the image of God; he had wept it was hard to say at what—not at his own cruelty, not at his wife's suffering, not in pity of the little soul that went away at last out of no human embrace; himself least of all could have told why he wept; yet was that weeping some sign of contact between his human soul and the great human soul of God; it was the beginning of a possible communion with the Father of all! Surely God saw this, and knew the heart he had made—saw the flax smoking yet! He who will not let us out until we have paid the uttermost farthing, rejoices over the offer of the first golden grain.

Donal dropped on his knees and prayed:—

"O Father of us all!" he said, "in whose hands are these unruly hearts of ours, we cannot manage ourselves; we ruin our own selves; but in thee is our help found!"

Prayer went from him; he rose from his knees.

"Go on; go on; don't stop!" cried the earl. "He may hear you—who can tell!"

Donal went down on his knees again.

"O God!" he said, "thou knowest us, whether we speak to thee or not; take from this man his hardness of heart. Make him love thee."

There he stopped again. He could say no more.

"I can't pray, my lord," he said, rising. "I don't know why. It seems as if nothing I said meant anything. I will pray for you when I am alone."

"Are there so many devils about me that an honest fellow can't pray in my company?" cried the earl. "I will pray myself, in spite of the whole swarm of them, big and little!—O God, save me! I don't want to be damned. I will be good if thou wilt make me. I don't care about it myself, but thou canst do as thou pleasest: It would be a fine thing if a rascal like me were to escape the devil through thy goodness after all. I'm worth nothing, but there's my wife! Pray, pray, Lord God, let me one day see my wife again!—For Christ's sake—ain't that the way, Grant?—Amen."

Donal had dropped on his knees once more when the earl began to pray. He uttered a hearty *Amen.* The earl turned sharply towards him, and saw he was weeping. He put out his hand to him, and said,

"You'll stand my friend, Grant?"

CHAPTER LXXX.

AWAY-FARING.

SUDDENLY what strength lady Arctura had, gave way, and she began to sink. But it was spring with the summer at hand; they hoped she would recover sufficiently to be removed to a fitter climate. She did not herself think so. She had hardly a doubt that her time was come. She was calm, often cheerful, but her spirits were variable. Donal's heart was sorer than he had thought it could be again.

One day, having been reading a little to her, he sat looking at her. He did not know how sad was the expression of his countenance. She looked up, smiled, and said,

"You think I am unhappy!—you could not look at me like that if you did not think so! I am only tired; I am not unhappy. I hardly know now what unhappiness is! If ever I look as if I were unhappy, it is only that I am waiting for more life. It is on the way; I feel it is, because I am so content with everything; I would have nothing other than it is. It is very hard for God that his children will not trust him to do with them what he pleases! I am sure, Mr. Grant, the world is all wrong, and on the way to be all wondrously right. It will cost God much labour yet: we will cost him as little as we can—won't we?—Oh, Mr. Grant, if it hadn't been for you, God would have been far away still! For a God I should have had something half an idol, half a commonplace tyrant! I should never have dreamed of the glory of God!"

"No, my lady!" returned Donal; "if God had not sent me, he would have sent somebody else; you were ready!"

"I am very glad he sent you! I should never have loved any other so much!"

Donal's eyes filled with tears. He was simple as a child. No male vanity, no self-exultation that a woman should love him, and tell him she loved him, sprang up in his heart. He knew

she loved him; he loved her; all was so natural it could not be otherwise: he never presumed to imagine her once thinking of him as he had thought of Ginevra. He was her servant, willing and loving as any angel of God: that was all—and enough!

"You are not vexed with your pupil—are you?" she resumed, again looking up in his face, this time with a rosy flush on her own.

"Why?" said Donal, with wonder.

"For speaking so to my master."

"Angry because you love me?"

"No, of course!" she responded, at once satisfied. "You knew that must be! How could I but love you—better than any one else in the world! You have given me life! I was dead.—You have been like another father to me!" she added, with a smile of heavenly tenderness. "But I could not have spoken to you like this, if I had not known I was dying."

The word shot a sting as of fire through Donal's heart.

"You are always a child, Mr. Grant," she went on; "death is making a child of me; it makes us all children: as if we were two little children together, I tell you I love you.—Don't look like that," she continued; "you must not forget what you have been teaching me all this time—that the will of God, the perfect God, is all in all! He is not a God far off: to know that is enough to have lived for! You have taught me that, and I love you with a true heart fervently."

Donal could not speak. He knew she was dying.

"Mr. Grant," she began again, "my soul is open to his eyes, and is not ashamed. I know I am going to do what would by the world be counted unwomanly; but you and I stand before our Father, not before the world. I ask you in plain words, knowing that if you cannot do as I ask you willingly, you will not do it. And be sure I shall plainly be dying before I claim the fulfilment of your promise if you give it. I do not want your answer all at once: you must think about it."

Here she paused a while, then said,

"I want you to marry me, if you will, before I go."

Donal could not yet speak. His soul was in a tumult of emotion.

"I am tired," she said. "Please go and think it over. If you say *no*, I shall only say, 'He knows best what is best!' I shall not be ashamed. Only you must not once think what the world would say: of all people we have nothing to do with the world! We have nothing to do but with God and love! If he be pleased with us, we can afford to smile at what his silly

children think of us: they mind only what their vulgar nurses say, not what their perfect father says: we need not mind them—need we?—I wonder at myself," she went on, for Donal did not utter a word, "for being able to speak like this; but then I have been thinking of it for a long time—chiefly as I lie awake. I am never afraid now—not though I lie awake all night: 'perfect love casteth out fear,' you know. I have God to love, and Jesus to love, and you to love, and my own father to love! When you know him, you will see how good a man can be without having been brought up like you!—Oh, Donal, do say something, or I shall cry, and crying kills me!"

She was sitting on a low chair, with the sunlight across her lap—for she was again in the sunny Garland-room—and the firelight on her face. Donal knelt gently down, and laid his hands in the sunlight on her lap, just as if he were going to say his prayers at his mother's knee. She laid both her hands on his.

"I have something to tell you," he said; "and then you must speak again."

"Tell me," said Arctura, with a little gasp.

"When I came here," said Donal, "I thought my heart so broken that it would never love—that way, I mean—any more. But I loved God better than ever: and as one I would fain help, I loved you from the very first. But I should have scorned myself had I once fancied you loved me more than just to do anything for me I needed done. When I saw you troubled, I longed to take you up in my arms, and carry you like a lovely bird that had fallen from one of God's nests; but never once, my lady, did I think of your caring for my love: it was yours as a matter of course. I once asked a lady to kiss me—just once, for a good-bye: she would not—and she was quite right; but after that I never spoke to a lady but she seemed to stand far away on the top of a hill against a sky."

He stopped. Her hands on his fluttered a little, as if they would fly.

"Is she still—is she—alive?" she asked.

"Oh yes, my lady."

"Then she may—change—" said Arctura, and stopped, for there was a stone in her heart.

Donal laughed. It was an odd laugh, but it did Arctura good.

"No danger of that, my lady! She has the best husband in the world—a much better than I should have made, much as I loved her."

"That can't be!"

"Why, my lady, her husband's sir Gibbie! She's lady Galbraith! I would never have wished her mine if I had known she loved Gibbie. I love her next to him."

"Then—then—"

"What, my lady?"

"Then—then—Oh, do say something!"

"What should I say? What God wills is fast as the roots of the universe, and lovely as its blossom."

Arctura burst into tears.

"Then you do not—care for me!"

Donal began to understand. In some things he went on so fast that he could not hear the cry behind him. She had spoken, and had been listening in vain for response! She thought herself unloved: he had shown her no sign that he loved her!

His heart was so full of love and the joy of love, that they had made him very still: now the delight of love awoke. He took her in his arms like a child, rose, and went walking about the room with her, petting and soothing her. He held her close to his heart; her head was on his shoulder, and his face was turned to hers.

"I love you," he said, "and love you to all eternity! I have love enough now to live upon, if you should die to-night, and I should tarry till he come. O God, thou art too good to me! It is more than my heart can bear! To make men and women, and give them to each other, and not be one moment jealous of the love wherewith they love one another, is to be a God indeed!"

So said Donal—and spoke the high truth. But alas for the love wherewith men and women love each other! There were small room for God to be jealous of *that!* It is the little love with which they love each other, the great love with which they love themselves, that hurts the heart of their father.

Arctura signed at length a prayer for release, and he set her gently down in her chair again. Then he saw her face more beautiful than ever before; and the rose that bloomed there was the rose of a health deeper than sickness. These children of God were of the blessed few who love the more that they know him present, whose souls are naked before him, and not ashamed. Let him that hears understand! if he understand not, let him hold his peace, and it will be his wisdom! He who has no place for this love in his religion, who thinks to be more holy without it, is not of God's mind when he said, "Let us make man!" He may be a saint, but he cannot be a man after God's own heart. The finished man is the saved man. The saint may have to be saved from more than sin.

"When shall we be married?" asked Donal.

"Soon, soon," answered Arctura.

"To-morrow then?"

"No, not to-morrow: there is no such haste—now that we understand each other," she added with a rosy smile. "I want to be married to you before I die, that is all—not just to-morrow, or the next day."

"When you please, my love," said Donal.

She laid her head on his bosom.

"We are as good as married now," she said: "we know that each loves the other! How I shall wait for you! You will be mine, you know—a little bit mine—won't you?—even if you should marry some beautiful lady after I am gone?—I shall love her when she comes."

"Arctura!" said Donal.

CHAPTER LXXXI.

A WILL AND A WEDDING.

But the opening of the windows of heaven, and the unspeakable rush of life through channels too narrow and banks too weak to hold its tide, caused a terrible inundation: the red flood broke its banks, and weakened all the land.

Arctura sent for Mr. Graeme, and commissioned him to fetch the family lawyer from Edinburgh. Alone with him she gave instructions concerning her will. The man of business shrugged his shoulders, laden with so many petty weights, bowed down with so many falsest opinions, and would have expostulated with her.

"Sir!" she said.

"You have a cousin who inherits the title!" he suggested.

"Mr. Fortune," she returned, "it may be I know as much of my family as you. I did not send for you to consult you, but to tell you how I would have my will drawn up!"

"I beg your pardon, my lady," rejoined the lawyer, "but there are things which may make it one's duty to speak out."

"Speak then; I will listen—that you may ease your mind."

He began a long, common-sense, worldly talk on the matter, nor once repeated himself. When he stopped,—

"Now have you eased your mind?" she asked.

"Does it need any explanation but that we loved each other?"

"You will find it difficult to convince the world that such was your sole motive."

"Having no care for the opinion of the world, I shall be satisfied if I convince you. The world needs never hear of the thing. Would you, Mr. Graeme, have had me not marry her, because the world, including not a few honest men like yourself, would say my object was the property?"

"Don't put the question to me; I am not the proper person to answer it. There is not a man in a hundred millions who with the chance would not have done the same, or whom all the rest would not blame for doing it. It would have been better for you, however, that there had been no will."

"How?"

"It makes it look the more like a scheme:—the will might have been disputed."

"Why do you say—*might have been?*"

"Because it is not worth disputing now. If the marriage stands, it annuls the will."

"I did not know; and I suppose she did not know either. Or perhaps she wanted to make the thing sure: if the marriage was not enough, the will would be—she may have thought. But I knew nothing of it."

"You did not?"

"Of course I did not."

Mr. Graeme held his peace. For the first time he doubted Donal's word.

"But I wanted to have a little talk with you," resumed Donal. "I want to know whether you think your duty all to the owner of the land, or in any measure to the tenants also."

"That is easy to answer: one employed by the landlord can owe the tenant nothing."

It was not just the answer he would have given to another questioner.

"Do you not owe him justice?" asked Donal.

"Every legal advantage I ought to take for my employer."

"Even to the grinding of the faces of the poor?"

"I have nothing to do, as his employé, with my own ideas as to what may be equitable."

He drew the line thus hard in pure opposition to Donal.

"What then would you say if the land were your own? Would you say you had it solely for your own and your family's good, or for that of the tenants as well?"

"I should very likely reason that what was good for them would in the long run be good for me too.—But if you want to know how I have treated the tenants, there are intelligent men amongst them, not at all prejudiced in favour of the factor!"

"I wish you would be open with me," said Donal.

"I prefer keeping my own place," rejoined Mr. Graeme.

"You speak as one who found a change in me," returned Donal. "There is none."

So saying he shook hands with him, bade him good morning, and turned with the depression of failure.

"I did not lead up to the point properly!" he said to himself.

CHAPTER LXXXIII.

INSIGHT.

MR. GRAEME was a good sort of man, and a gentleman; but he was not capable of meeting Donal on the ground on which he approached him: on that level he had never set foot. There is nothing more disappointing to the generous man than the way in which his absolute frankness is met by the man of the world—always looking out for motives, and imagining them *after what is in himself.*

There was great confidence between the brother and sister, and as he walked homeward, Mr. Graeme was not so well pleased with himself as to think with satisfaction on the report of the interview he could give Kate. He did not accuse himself with regard to anything he had said, but he felt his behaviour influenced by jealousy of the low-born youth who had supplanted him. For, if Percy could not succeed to the title, neither could he have succeeded to the property; and but for the will or the marriage, perhaps but for the two together, he would himself have come in for that also! The will was worth nothing except the marriage was disputed: annul the marriage, and the will was of force!

He told his sister, as nearly as he could, all that had passed between them.

"If he wanted me to talk to him," he said, "why did he tell me that about Forgue? It was infernally stupid of him! But what's bred in the bone—! A gentleman 's not made in a day!"

"Nor in a thousand years, Hector!" rejoined his sister. "Donal Grant is a gentleman in the best sense of the word! That

you say he is not, lets me see you are vexed with yourself. He is a little awkward sometimes, I confess; but only when he is looking at a thing from some other point of view, and does not like to say you ought to have been looking at it from the same. And you can't say he shuffles, for he never stops till he has done his best to make you!—What have you been saying to him, Hector?"

"Nothing but what I have told you; it's rather what I have not been saying!" answered her brother. "He would have had me open out to him, and I wouldn't. How could I! Whatever I said that pleased him, would have looked as if I wanted to secure my situation! Hang it all! I have a good mind to throw it up. How is a Graeme to serve under a bumpkin?"

"The man is not a bumpkin; he is a scholar and a poet!" said the lady.

"Pooh! pooh! What's a poet?"

"One that may or may not be as good a man of business as yourself when it is required of him."

"Come, come! don't you turn against me, Kate! It's hard enough to bear as it is!"

Miss Graeme made no reply. She was meditating all she knew of Donal, to guide her to the something to which she was sure her brother had not let him come; and presently she made him recount again all they had said to each other.

"I tell you, Hector," she exclaimed, "you never made such a fool of yourself in your life! If I know human nature, that man is different from any other you have had to do with. It will take a woman, a better woman than your sister, I confess, to understand him; but I see a little farther into him than you do. He is a man who, never having had money enough to learn the bad uses of it, and never having formed habits it takes money to supply, having no ambition, living in books not in places, and for pleasure having more at his command in himself than the richest—he is a man who, I say, would find money an impediment to his happiness, for he must have a sense of duty with regard to it which would interfere with everything he liked best. Besides, though he does not care a straw for the judgment of the world where it differs from him, he would be sorry to seem to go against that judgment where he agrees with it: scorning to marry any woman for her money, he would not have the world think he had done so."

"Ah, Katey, there I have you! The world would entirely approve of his doing that!"

"I will take a better position then:—he would not willingly seem to have done a thing he himself despises. The man believes himself sent into the world to teach it something: he would not

have it thrown in his teeth that, after all, he looks to the main chance as keenly as another! He would starve before he would have men say so—yes, even say so falsely. I am as sure he did not marry lady Arctura for her money, as I am sure lord Forgue, or you, Hector, would have done it if you had had a chance.—There! —My conviction is that the bumpkin sought a fit opening to tell you that the will was to go for nothing, and that no word need be said about the marriage. You know he made you promise not to mention it—only I wormed it out of you!"

"That's just like you women! The man you take a fancy to is always head and shoulders above other men!"

"As you take it so, I will tell you more: that man will never marry again!"

"Wait a bit. Admiration is sometimes mutual: who knows but he may ask you next!"

"If he did ask me, I might take him, but I should never think so much of him!"

"Heroic Kate!"

"If you had been a little more heroic, Hector, you would have responded to him—and found it considerably to your advantage."

"You don't imagine I would be indebted——"

"Hush! Hush! Don't pledge yourself in a hurry—even to me!" said Kate. "Leave as wide a sea-margin about your boat as you may. You don't know what you would or would not. Mr. Grant knows, but you do not."

"Mr. Grant again!—Well!"

"Well!—we shall see!"

And they soon did. For that same evening Donal called, and asked to see Miss Graeme.

"I am sorry my brother is gone down to the town," she said.

"It was you I wanted to see," he answered. "I wish to speak openly to you, for I imagine you will understand me better than your brother. Perhaps I ought rather to say—I shall be better able to explain myself to you."

There was that in his countenance which seemed to seize and hold her—a calm exaltation, as of a man who had outlived weakness and was facing the eternal. The spirit of a smile hovered about his mouth and eyes, embodying itself now and then in a grave, sweet, satisfied smile: the man seemed full of content, not with himself, but with something he would gladly share.

"I have been talking with your brother," he said, after a brief pause.

"I know," she answered "I am afraid he did not meet you

as he ought. He is a good and honourable man; but like most men he needs a moment to pull himself together. Few men, Mr. Grant, when suddenly called upon, answer from the best that is in them."

"The fact is simply this," resumed Donal: "I do not want the Morven property. I thank God for lady Arctura: what was hers I do not desire."

"But may it not be your duty to take it, Mr. Grant?—Pardon me for suggesting duty to one who always acts from it."

"I have reflected, and do not think God wants me to take it. Because she is mine, ought I of necessity to be enslaved to all her accidents? Must I, because I love her, hoard her gowns and shoes?"

Then first Miss Graeme noted that he never spoke of his wife as in the past.

"But there are others to be considered," she replied. "You have made me think about many things, Mr. Grant! My brother and I have had many talks as to what we would do if the land were ours."

"And yours it shall be," said Donal, "if you will take it as a trust for the good of all whom it supports. I have other work to do."

"I will tell my brother what you say," answered Miss Graeme, with victory in her heart—for was it not as she had divined?

"It is better," continued Donal, "to help make good men than happy tenants. Besides, I know how to do the one, and I do not know how to do the other. There would always be a prejudice against me too, as not to the manner born. But if your brother should accept my offer, I hope he will not think me interfering if I talk sometimes of the principles of the relation. Things go wrong, generally, because men have such absurd and impossible notions about *possession*. They call things their own which it is impossible, from their very nature, ever to possess or make their own. Power was never given to man over men for his own sake, and the nearer he that so uses it comes to success, the more utter will prove his discomfiture. Talk to your brother about it, Miss Graeme. Tell him that, as heir to the title, and as head of the family, he can do more than any other with the property, and I will gladly make it over to him without reserve. I would not be even partially turned aside from my own calling."

"I will tell him what you say. I told him he had misunderstood you. I saw into your generous thought."

"It is not generous at all. My dear Miss Graeme, you do not know how little of a temptation such things are to me! There are some who only care to inherit straight from the first Father. You

may say the earth is the Lord's, and therefore a part of that first inheritance: I admit it; but such possession as this in question would not satisfy me in the least. I must inherit the earth in a far deeper, grander, truer way than calling the land mine, before I shall count myself to have come into my own. I want to have all things just as the maker of me wants me to have them.—I will call on you again to-morrow; I must now go back to the earl. Poor man, he is sinking fast! but I believe he is more at peace than he has ever been before!"

Donal took his leave, and Miss Graeme had plenty to think of till her brother's return: if she felt a little triumphant, it may be pardoned her.

He was ashamed, and not a little humbled by what she told him. He did not wait for Donal to come to him, but went to the castle early the next morning. Nor was he mistaken in trusting Donal to believe that it was not from eagerness to retrace in his own interest the false step he had taken, but from desire to show his shame of having behaved so ungenerously: Donal received him so as to make it plain he did not misunderstand him, and they had a long talk. Graeme was all the readier for his blunder to hear what Donal had to say, and Donal's unquestionable disinterestedness was endlessly potent with Graeme. Their interview resulted in Donal's thinking still better of him than before, and being satisfied that, up to his light, the man was honest—which is saying much—and thence open to conviction, and both sides of a question. But ere it was naturally over, Donal was summoned to the earl.

After his niece's death, no one would do for him but Donal; nobody could please him but Donal. His mind as well as his body was much weaker. But the intellect, great thing though it be, is yet but the soil out of which, or rather in which, higher things must grow, and it is well when that soil is not too strong, so to speak, for the most gracious and lovely of plants to root themselves in it. When the said soil is proud and unwilling to serve, it must be thinned and pulverized with sickness, failure, poverty, fear—that the good seeds of God's garden may be able to root themselves in it; when they get up a little, they will use all the riches and all the strength of the stiffest soil.

"Who will have the property now?" he asked one day. "Is the factor anywhere in the running?"

"Title and property both will be his," answered Donal.

"And my poor Davie?" said the earl, with wistful question in the eyes that gazed up in Donal's face. "Forgue, the rascal, has all my money in his power already."

"I will see to Davie," replied Donal. "When you and I meet, my lord—by and by, I shall not be ashamed."

The poor man was satisfied. He sent for Davie, and told him he was always to do as Mr. Grant wished, that he left him in his charge, and that he must behave to him like a son.

Davie was fast making acquaintance with death—but it was not to him dreadful as to most children, for he saw it through the face and words of the man whom he most honoured.

CHAPTER LXXXIV.

MORVEN HOUSE.

In the evening Donal went again to the home-farm. Finding himself alone in the drawing-room, he walked out into the old garden.

"Thank God," he said to himself, "if my wife should come here some sad, sweet night, with a low moon-crescent, and a gently thinking wind, and wander about the garden, it will not be to know herself forgotten!"

He went up and down the grassy paths. Once again, all as long ago—for it seemed long now—he was joined by Miss Graeme.

"I couldn't help fancying," she said as she came up to him, "that I saw lady Arctura walking by your side.—God forgive me! how could I be so heartless as mention her!"

"Her name will always be pleasant in my ears," returned Donal. "I was thinking of her—that was how you felt as if you saw her! You did not really see anything, did you?"

"Oh, no!"

"She is nearer me than that," said Donal. "She will be with me wherever I am; I shall never be sad. God is with me, and I do not weep that I cannot see him: I wait; I wait."

Miss Graeme was in tears.

"Mr. Grant," she said, "she is gone a happy angel to heaven instead of a pining woman! That is your doing! God bless you!—You will let me think of you as a friend?"

"Always; always: you loved her."

"I did not at first; I thought of her only as a poor troubled creature! Now I know there was more life in her trouble than

in my content. I came not only to love her, but to look up to her as a saint: if ever there was one, it was she, Mr. Grant. She often came here after I showed her that poem. She used to walk here alone in the twilight. That horrid Miss Carmichael! she was the plague of her life!"

"She was God's messenger—to buffet her, and make her know her need of him. Be sure, Miss Graeme, not a soul can do without him."

Here Mr. Graeme joined them.

"I do not think the earl will last many days," said Donal. "It would be well, it seems to me, at once upon his death to take possession of the house in the town. It is the only property that goes with the title. And of course you would at once take up your abode in the castle! You will find in the earl's papers many proofs, I imagine, that his son has no claim. I would have a deed of gift drawn up, but would rather you seemed to come in by natural succession. We are not bound to tell the world everything; we are only bound to be able without shame to tell it everything. And then I shall have a favour to ask: Morven House, down in the town, is of no great use to you: let me rent it of you. I should like to live there and have a school, with Davie for my first pupil. When we get another, we will try to make a man of him too. We will not care so much about making a great scholar, or a great anything of him, but a true man. We will try to help the whole man of him into the likeness of the one man."

Here Mr. Graeme broke in.

"You will never make a living that way!" he said.

Donal opened his eyes and looked at him. Like one convicted and ashamed, the eyes of the man of business fell before those of the man of God.

"Ah," said Donal, "you have not an idea, Mr. Graeme, on how little I could live!—Here, you had better take the will," he added, pulling it from his pocket.

Mr. Graeme hesitated.

"If you would rather not, I will keep it. I would throw it in the fire, but either you or I must keep it for a time as against all chances."

Mr. Graeme took it.

That night the earl died.

Donal wrote to Percy that his father was dead. Two days after, he appeared. The new earl met him in the hall.

"Mr. Graeme," said Percy,——

"I am lord Morven, Mr Graeme," returned his lordship.

The fellow said an evil word, turned on his heel, and left them to bury his father without him.

The funeral over, the earl turned to Donal and looked him in the face: they walked back to the castle arm in arm, and from that moment were as brothers.

Earl Hector did nothing of importance without consulting Donal, and Donal had the more influence both with landlord and tenants that he had no *interest* in the property.

The same week he left the castle, and took possession of Morven House. The people said Mr. Grant had played his cards well: had they known what he had really done, they would have called him a born idiot.

Davie, to whom no calamity could be overwhelming so long as he had Mr. Grant, accompanied him gladly, more than content to live with him till he went to college, whither the earl wished to send him. Donal hindered rather than sped the day. When it came, the earl would have had him go too, but Donal would not.

"I have done what I can," he said. "It is time he should walk alone."

It was soon evident that the boy would not disgrace him. There is no certainty as to how deep any teaching may have gone —as to whether it has reached the issues of life or not, until a youth is left by himself, and has to choose and refuse companions: the most promising youths are often but promisers.

With the full concurrence of Miss Graeme, Donal had persuaded mistress Brookes—easy persuasion where the suggestion was enough!—to keep house for him. They went together, and together unlocked the door of Morven House.

Mistress Brookes said the place was in an awful state. There was not much, to be sure, for the mason to do, but for the carpenter! It had not been touched for generations! He must go away, and stay away till she summoned him!

Donal gladly went home to his hills, and took Davie with him. He told his father and mother, sir Gibbie and his lady, the things that had befallen him, and every one approved heartily of what he had done. His mother took his renunciation of the property as a matter of course. All agreed it should not be spoken of. When they returned to Auchars, sir Gibbie and lady Galbraith went with them, and staid for some weeks. The townsfolk said he was but a poor baronet that could not speak mortal word.

Lord Morven and Miss Graeme had done their best to make the house what they thought Donal would like. But in the castle they kept for him the rooms lady Arctura had called her own. There he gathered the books, and a few other of the more imme-

diately personal possessions of his wife—her piano for one—upon which he taught himself to play a little; and thither he betook himself often on holidays, and always on Sunday evenings. What went on then I leave to the imagination of the reader who knows that alone one may meet many, sitting still may travel far, and silent make the universe hear.

Lord Morven kept Larkie for Davie. The last I heard of Davie was that he was in India, an officer in the army, beloved of his men, and exercising a most beneficial influence on his regiment. The things he had learned he had so learned that they went out from him, finding new ground in which to root and grow. In his day and generation he helped the coming of the kingdom of truth and righteousness, and so fulfilled his high calling.

It was some time before Donal had any pupils, and he never had many, for he was regarded as a most peculiar man, with ideas about education odd in the extreme. It was granted, however, that, if a boy stayed, or rather if he allowed him to stay with him long enough, he was sure to turn out a gentleman: that which was deeper and was the life of the gentleman, people seldom saw —would seldom have valued if they had seen. Most parents would like their children to be ladies and gentlemen; that they should be sons and daughters of God, they do not care!

The few wise souls in the neighbourhood know Donal as the heart of the place—the man to go to in any difficulty, in any trouble or apprehension.

Miss Carmichael grew by degrees less talkative, and less obtrusive of her opinions. After some years she condescended to marry a farmer on lord Morven's estate. Their only child, a thoughtful boy, and a true reader, sought the company of the grave man with the sweet smile, going often to his house to ask him about this or that. He reminded him of Davie, and grew very dear to him. The mother discovering that, as often as he stole away, it was to go to the master—everybody called him the *maister*—scolded and forbade. But the prohibition brought such a time of tears and gloom and loss of appetite, and her husband so little shared her prejudices against the master, that she was compelled to recall it, and the boy went and went as before. When he was taken ill, and on his deathbed, nobody could make him happy but the master; he almost nursed him through the last few days of his short earthly life. But the mother seemed not to like him any the better—rather to regard him as having deprived her of some of her rights in the love of her boy.

Donal is still a present power of heat and light in the town of Auchars. He wears the same solemn look, the same hovering

smile. They say to those who can read them, "I know in whom I have believed." It is the God who is the Father of the Lord that he believes in. His life is hid with Christ in God, and he has no anxiety about anything. The wheels of the coming chariot, moving fast or slow to fetch him, are always moving; and whether it arrive at night, or at cock-crowing, or in the blaze of noon, is one to him. He is ready for the life his Arctura knows. "God is," he says, "and all is well." He never disputes, rarely seeks to convince. "I will let what light I have shine; but disputation is smoke. It is to no profit!—And I do like," he says, "to give and to get the good of things!"

THE END.

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